The Sons of Bayezid

EMPIRE BUILDING AND REPRESENTATION IN THE OTTOMAN CIVIL WAR OF 1402-13

BY

DIMITRIS J. KASTRITSIS

BRILL THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE AND ITS HERITAGE

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The Ottoman Empire and its Heritage

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On the cover: Lokman, *Hünername* (1584–1588), detail of miniature showing Mehmed Çelebi's 1403 enthronement in Bursa. Topkapı Palace Library, MS. Hazine 1523, folio 112b. Reprinted by permission.

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To the memory of my parents

By force of armes stout Mahomet his father's kingdome gaines,
And doth the broken state thereof repaire with restlesse paines.
What so the force of Tamerlane had from his father tane,
He by his fortune and his force restor'd the fame againe.
The Dacians he vanquished, and Servians in field,
And forc'd the people neere to thee faire Ister, for to yeeld.
So once againe the Turkish state (by him rais'd up on hie)
Hath to thine empire, Romulus, brought great calamitie.

Richard Knolles, *The Generall Historie of the Turkes* (1603)

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PREFACE

As is often the case with first books, the present study began its life as the author's doctoral dissertation. In the two years separating the dissertation from the book, little has changed in my view of the Ottoman civil war of 1402–1413 and its significance for Ottoman history. If anything, I am now even more keenly aware of the need to bring this period out of the darkness and into the limelight of history, so that it may become the subject of serious historical study. Since the present work is the first of its kind, while writing it I was often frustrated by the lack of an already existing narrative on which to rely for the basic sequence of events. Under the circumstances, I had little choice but to construct such a narrative myself, making use of primary sources and the little existing literature, most of which was in the form of journal and encyclopedia articles. Although I am sometimes critical of the work of the few colleagues who had the courage to tackle this complex period of Ottoman history, I appreciate that without their work my task would have been even more difficult. Needless to say, the present book is not a definitive study, but only the first of its kind, and certainly far from perfect. I hope that it will become the cause for further investigation, since it is my belief that the ideas tentatively set forth in its covers deserve more attention than they have so far received.

The most obvious difference between my presentation of the period 1402–1413 and that of other historians before me is the very name by which I have chosen to call it, namely "the Ottoman civil war." In Ottoman history, this period is usually (but not always) known as "the interregnum," the corresponding Turkish term being *fetret devri*. In the original dissertation I had chosen to accept that name, simply pointing out that it was not of Ottoman origin, but apparently coined by the nineteenth century Austrian historian Josef von Hammer-Purgstall (*fetret devri* being but a translation that gained currency in the mid-twentieth century). Now I find myself no longer satisfied with the term interregnum, as I feel that it detracts from the importance of the years in question, reducing them to a dark interlude between the reigns of Bayezid I (1389–1402) and Mehmed I (1413–1421). While it is true that

during the years 1402–1413 there was never an undisputed claimant to the Ottoman throne, the habit of seeing those years as an interlude between more stable reigns has created the impression that they were a time of chaos, devoid of any coherent politics or culture. In fact, exactly the opposite was true: during that period the Ottoman realm was divided between rival claimants to the throne, each of whom claimed to be the legitimate successor of Bayezid I and carried out coherent policies, both internally and in his diplomatic relations with foreign powers.

As leaders of rival factions in a civil war, the Ottoman princes deployed literature, ceremonial and other means of representation in order to appeal to the hearts and minds of their subjects, and it is no coincidence that the earliest surviving narratives of Ottoman history were written during the civil war. These narratives had a strong influence on later Ottoman historiography and self-perception: the sixteenth century miniature from Lokman's *Hünernāme* decorating the cover of the present volume does not represent, as one might expect, Mehmed's enthronement in 1413 (the year in which his reign is conventionally thought to begin), but rather an elaborate enthronement ceremony held in Bursa in 1403, at the height of the civil war, which is described in a contemporary chronicle commissioned for propaganda purposes.[1] To the late sixteenth-century palace audience reading the *Hünernāme*, it was obvious that Mehmed I had ascended to the Ottoman throne immediately after his father's death, even if he had to fight his brothers for an entire decade before his throne was secure.

It gives me great pleasure to thank the many friends, colleagues, and institutions who helped and supported me during the long years this book was in the making. I will limit myself to those who had a direct influence on the final product, as well as those without whose support it could never have been completed. I would like to begin with my teachers and dissertation advisors, each of whom influenced my work in a different way. Cemal Kafadar is by far the greatest overall influence, especially on matters of historiography. I would like to thank him for being a constant source of inspiration and encouragement during my long years of study at Harvard, and for introducing me

[1] *Hünernāme: Minyatürleri ve Sanatçıları*. Introduction by Nigâr Anafarta (Istanbul: Doğan Kardeş, 1969), x, 9. The enthronement date comes from a chronogram. For more details on the contemporary chronicle (the *Ahval*), see the section on the sources in the introduction.

to the endless possibilities of Ottoman history. I am equally grateful to Elizabeth Zachariadou, who shared with me her research notes and helped me to see the Byzantine, Balkan, and Venetian angle of things, in addition to reading numerous drafts. Professor Zachariadou will always serve for me as an example of scholarly integrity and erudition. The late and much missed Şinasi Tekin introduced me to the intricacies of Old Anatolian Turkish language and paleography and helped me with the texts which form such an important part of the present work; unfortunately, his untimely passing did not permit him to see the final results. His place was taken by another of my teachers, Wheeler M. Thackston, whom I would like to thank for serving as a reader at a moment's notice, in addition to teaching me Persian and the art of idiomatic translation. To these names I would like to add Halil İnalcık, who may not have been my teacher in the usual sense, but who has always guided me through his publications, which include the most important work on the Ottoman civil war. As the greatest living expert in Ottoman history, İnalcık has had a profound influence on my work, and I would like to thank him for pointing the way. İnalcık is also senior editor of the Brill Ottoman series, and I view it as a great honor that he accepted my manuscript for publication in the year of his ninetieth birthday. I am equally grateful to the other senior editor of the series, Suraiya Faroqhi, for her many useful comments on my manuscript.

This study would never have been possible without the generosity of several institutions. First I would like to thank the Center of Middle Eastern Studies at Harvard University, which helped me financially and otherwise during my years of graduate study there. During the 2000–2001 academic year, my dissertation research at Harvard was funded by a Foreign Language and Area Studies Fellowship from the U.S. Department of Education, and a Whiting Fellowship held in 2003–2004 was of crucial importance during the most intensive stages of writing. I conceived this project in summer of 1997 in Istanbul as a pre-dissertation fellow of the Institute of Turkish Studies. The conversion of the dissertation to a book took place while I was a guest lecturer at Yale University's Hellenic Studies Program, to whose sponsor, the Niarchos Foundation, I owe a debt of gratitude. I would like to thank the program's co-directors, John Geanakoplos and particularly Stathis Kalyvas, as well as the Associate Program Chair George Syrimis, for making my year at Yale a pleasant and productive one. Thanks are also due to my new employer, the School of History at the University of St Andrews and its chair Andrew Pettegree, for delay-

ing my appointment so that I could complete my book while at Yale. Special thanks are due to my copy-editor, Christopher Adler, who did an excellent job at very short notice, and to Trudy Kamperveen and the other editors at Brill for being so professional. Finally, for their input and support at various stages, I would like to thank the following: Gönül Alpay-Tekin, Christopher Anagnostakis, Christina Andriotis, Helga Anetshofer, Dimiter Angelov, Sahar Bazzaz, Emmanuel Bourbouhakis, Giancarlo Casale, Houchang Chehabi, Erdem Çıpa, Charitini Douvaldzi, John Duffy, Ahmet Ersoy, Ioannis D. Evrigenis, Cornell Fleischer, Eurydice Georganteli, Çiğdem Kafesçioğlu, Konstantinos Kambouroglou, Hakan Karateke, Machiel Kiel, Selim Kuru, David Mann, Gülru Necipoğlu, Hedda Reindl, Felipe Rojas, and Yiannis Sarafidis. Needless to say, any mistakes are my own.

My greatest debt of gratitude is to my parents, Costas D. Kastritsis and Patricia A. Kastritsis, who always encouraged my academic curiosity, as well as to my sister Elena Kastritsis and her husband Benjamin Banayan for their love and support. It saddens me greatly that the untimely death first of my mother and then of my father did not allow either of them to see this work in its final form, although I am grateful that my father saw it at least as a bound dissertation. This book is dedicated to their memory.

ABBREVIATIONS

ASP	*Archiv für slavische Philologie*
AÜDTCFD	*Ankara Üniversitesi Dil ve Tarih-Coğrafya Fakültesi Dergisi*
BSOAS	*Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*
BZ	*Byzantinische Zeitschrift*
EI^2	*The Encyclopedia of Islam* (new edition)
EJOS	*Electronic Journal of Oriental Studies*
İA	*İslam Ansiklopedisi*
JNES	*Journal of Near Eastern Studies*
JTS	*Journal of Turkish Studies*
ODB	*Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*
REB	*Revue des Études Byzantines*
ROL	*Revue de l'Orient Latin*
SAO	*Studia et Acta Orientalia*
TD	*Tarih Dergisi*
TDVİA	*Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı Islâm Ansiklopedisi*
WZKM	*Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes*
ZDMG	*Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenladischen Gesellschaft*

TRANSLITERATION AND PRONUNCIATION

Transliteration is a perennial problem in Middle Eastern studies. I had originally chosen to use full transcription following the system current in Ottoman history, which is a modified version of modern Turkish spelling to which macrons and other diacritics have been added. But such a system did not seem appropriate for non-Ottoman names (e.g. those belonging to Timurids) so for those words I had used a different transcription system. The end result was an anachronistic nationalization of names that in the fifteenth century would have been indistinguishable (e.g. *Meḥemmed* for an Ottoman prince, versus *Muḥammad* for a Timurid one). Since it was impossible to be fully consistent or historically accurate, and the use of full diacritics has an alienating effect on the non-specialist, in the present volume I have opted for modern spelling, with the exception of words in italics (terms, book titles, and original quotations). I have also included full transcription of all proper names in the index, in order to facilitate research. For the same purpose, place names are given in their modern form and often in several languages.

The following pronunciation guide will be of use to those not familiar with the modern Turkish alphabet:

Vowels

Turkish a, e, i, o, u are pronounced more or less as in Italian or Spanish
ü, ö are roughly equivalent to the same vowels in German
ı is a schwa, like the *i* in *basin*
ā, ū, ī are pronounced as long

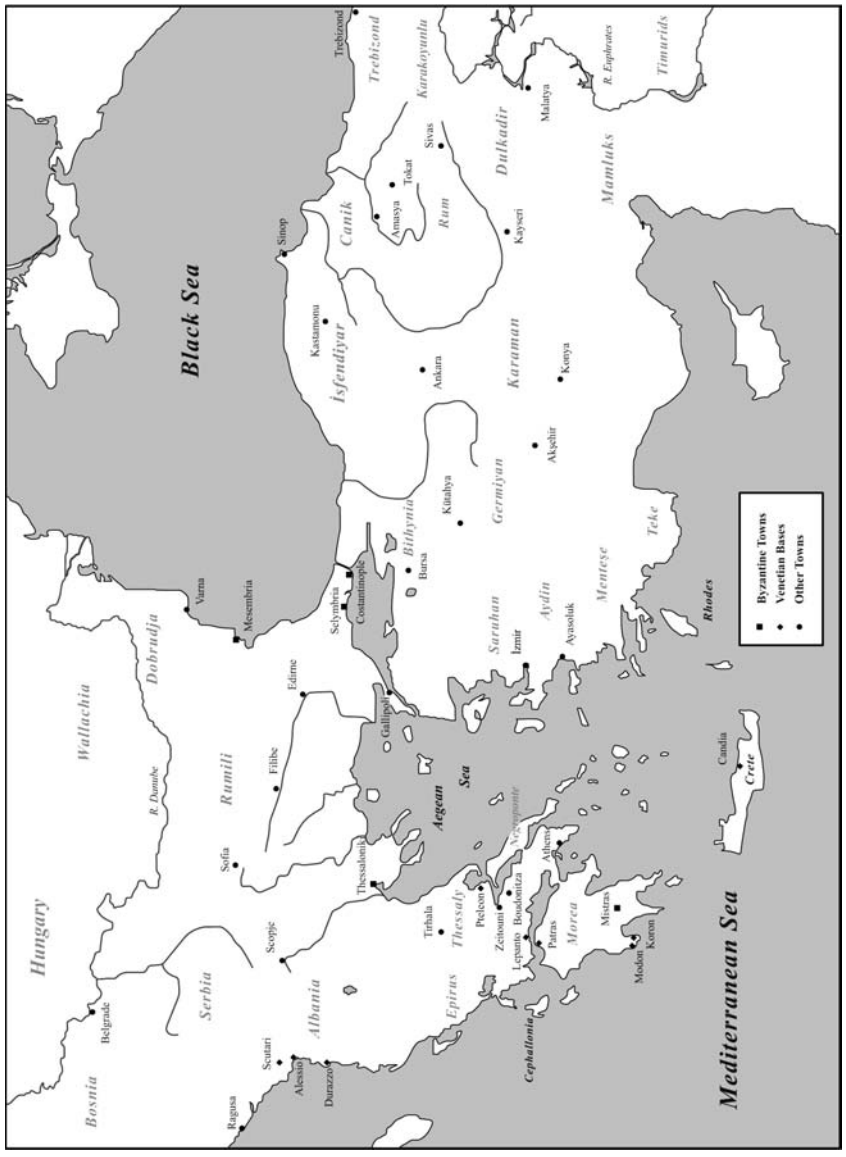
Consonants

c = English j
ç = English ch
ş = English sh
ġ = gutteral gh in non-Turkish words, pronounce like g
ğ = gutteral gh in Turkish words, usually silent but lengthens previous vowel
r = flipped or rolled (when double)

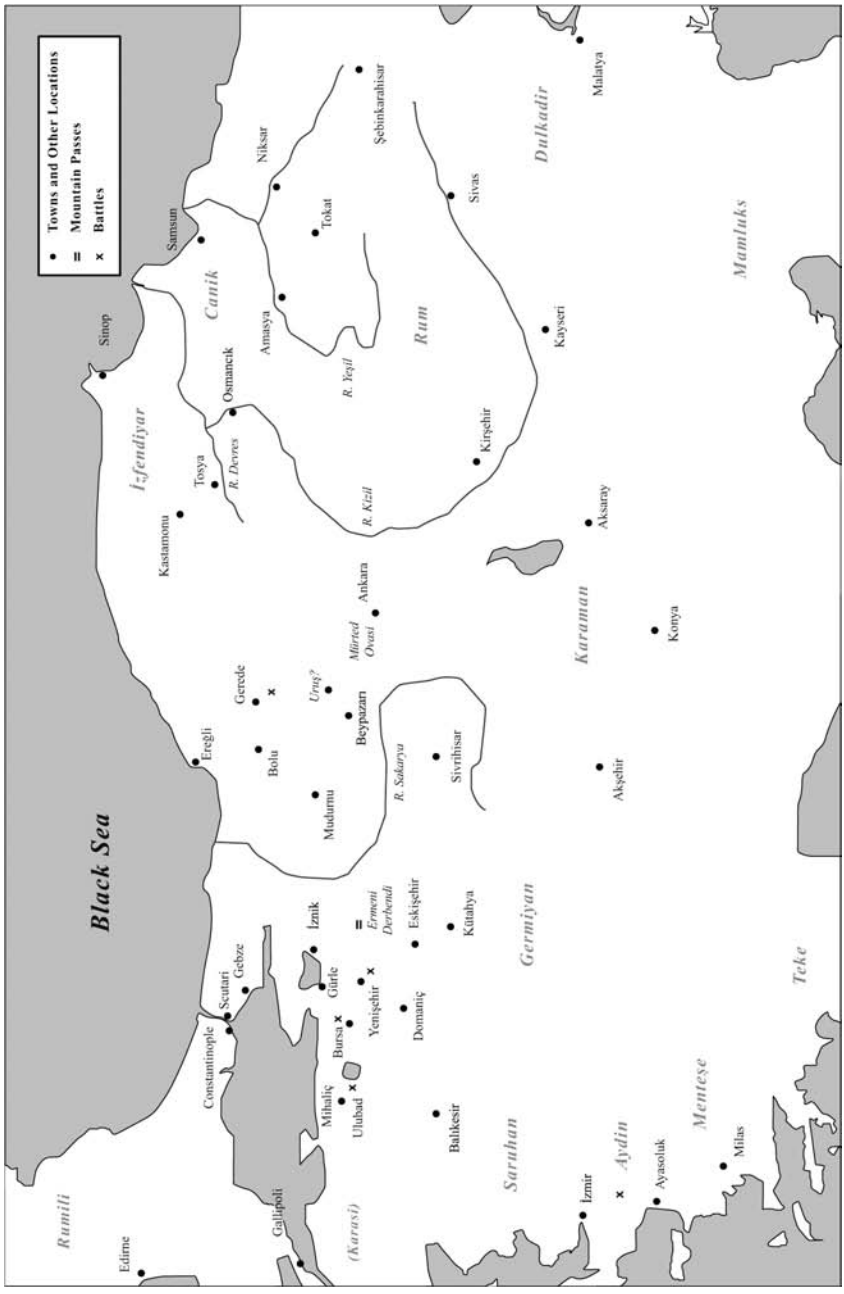
Double consonants are pronounced as such (like in Italian)

For Turkish pronunciation purposes, all other diacritics can be ignored.

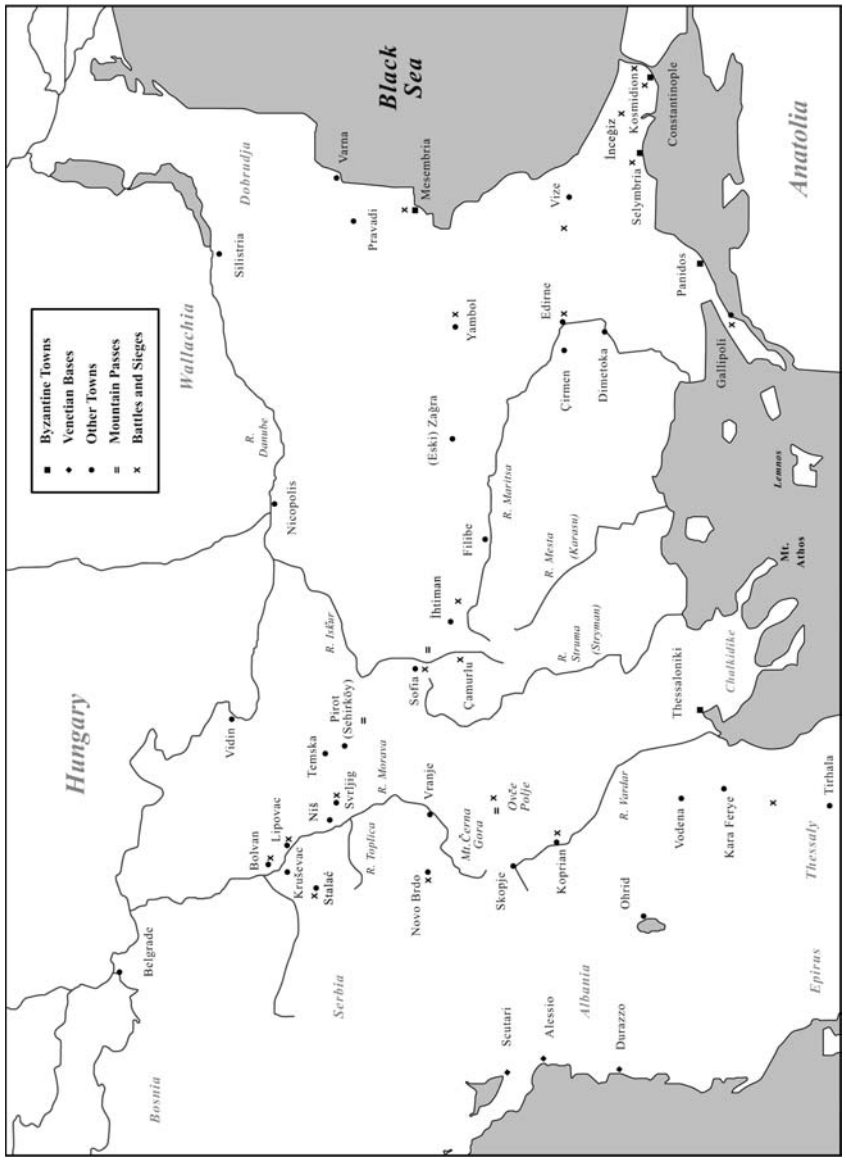
MAPS



Map 1: The Balkans and Anatolia during the Ottoman civil war of 1402–1413



Map 2: The civil war in Anatolia



Map 3: The civil war in Rumeli

INTRODUCTION
THE BATTLE OF ANKARA AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

On 28 July 1402, a great battle was fought on a plain outside Ankara. On one side was the army of Timur (Tamerlane, r. 1370–1405), "the last of the great nomad conquerors," who had spent the two preceding decades building a vast empire on the Mongol model.[1] On the other was that of the Ottoman ruler Bayezid I 'the Thunderbolt' (*Yıldırım*, r. 1389–1402), who styled himself "Sultan of Rum" (*Sulṭān-ı Rūm*) in order to lay claim to the legacy of the Seljuks of Rum.[2] Like Timur, Bayezid had spent most of his reign on campaign, enlarging the Ottoman domains toward the east and west to include almost all of the territory that had once belonged to the Eastern Roman Empire (Byzantium). In an effort to create a seamless, centralized state, Bayezid had threatened his Christian vassals in the Balkans (Ottoman *Rumili* or *Rumeli*) with elimination, crushed the knights of Western Christendom at Nicopolis (1396), and subjected the Byzantine capital of Constantinople to a harrowing eight-year siege (1394–1402). In the east, he had carried out a series of campaigns against rival Muslim states, the Turkish *beylik*s or emirates of Anatolia (Asia Minor). Through these campaigns, which were unpopular with his Muslim subjects and therefore had to be carried out by armies consisting largely of slaves (*kul*) and Christian vassals, Bayezid had expanded his domains in Anatolia to match Ottoman expansion in Europe. But this eastward expansion brought Bayezid into conflict with Timur, whose interests also extended into eastern Anatolia.[3]

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[1] Beatrice Forbes Manz, *The Rise and Rule of Tamerlane* (Cambridge: Cambridge Canto, 1989), 1–2.

[2] The Ottomans were not the only post-Seljukid dynasty in Anatolia to use the title, nor was Bayezid I the first Ottoman ruler to do so. However, Bayezid went further than his predecessors, asking that the title be conferred upon him by the Abbasid puppet-caliph in Cairo. See Paul Wittek, "Le Sultan de Rûm," *Annuaire de l'Institut de Philologie et d'Histoire Orientales et Slaves* 6 (1938), 381–382.

[3] Beatrice Forbes Manz, "Tīmūr Lang," EI²; Halil İnalcık, "Bāyazīd I," EI².

In the Battle of Ankara, the Ottomans were completely crushed and their Sultan was taken prisoner. Contingents from the absorbed Anatolian *beylik*s crossed over to their former lords, who were on Timur's side, and Sultan Bayezid was left with his janissaries and Serbian vassals. Following his victory, Timur spent nine months in Anatolia with his armies, pillaging the countryside, looting Bursa and other Ottoman towns, and reconstituting the Turkish *beylik*s that Bayezid had dispossessed in creating his empire.[4] Despite the scale of the destruction in Anatolia, however, Timur's armies never set foot in Rumeli, the western half of Bayezid's empire, and Timur left the Ottoman dynasty intact, apart from Sultan Bayezid who died in captivity and his son Mustafa who was apparantly taken captive to Samarkand.[5]

After Timur returned to Central Asia in the spring of 1403, Bayezid's sons Emir Süleyman, İsa Beg, Mehmed Çelebi, and later also Musa Çelebi began to fight over the provinces that still remained in Ottoman hands. These included Rumeli, Bithynia, and the province of Rum in North Central Anatolia, centered around the cities of Amasya and Tokat.[6] For a period of eleven years usually referred to as the Ottoman interregnum (Turkish *Fetret Devri*), Bayezid's sons fought the first (and arguably also the worst) succession struggle in the six hundred years of Ottoman history. Mehmed I finally emerged as the winner after defeating his brother Musa at the Battle of Çamurlu (5 July 1413). From 1413 until his death in 1421, Mehmed I (known as Sultan Mehmed Çelebi, or Kyritzes in Greek) reigned as sole Ottoman sultan, although he was not uncontested.[7] In 1415, Timur's successor Shahrukh released Mehmed's older brother, 'the false' (*düzme*) Mustafa, who formed an alliance with Byzantium and revived the succession struggle for about a year (1416). Mustafa's challenge coincided with a major social rebellion under the

[4] For Timur's campaign in Anatolia, the standard work is Marie Mathilde Alexandrescu-Dersca, *La campagne de Timur en Anatolie (1402)* (Bucharest: Monitorul Oficial si Imprimeriile Statului, 1942).

[5] Halil İnalcık, "Meḥemmed I," EI², 974, 976.

[6] For the name of this province, see Wittek, "Le Sultan de Rûm," 364–366.

[7] In this period, the title *çelebi* meant 'prince' or 'young lord.' Contemporary sources suggest that during the civil war, both *çelebi* and its Greek translation *kyritzes* were associated primarily with Mehmed. Musa was also called *çelebi* because of his young age, while Süleyman was invariably called *emir*. The title *beg* was also used, especially for İsa and Musa. Mehmed's Greek title *kyritzes* entered Turkish as *kirişçi*, which was sometimes misinterpreted as *güreşçi*, 'the wrestler.' On the question of Mehmed's name, see Paul Wittek, "Der 'Beiname' des osmanischen Sultans Mehemmed I," *Eretz-Israel* 7 (1964): 144–153.

Islamic legal scholar and mystic Şeyh Bedreddin, who had served in the administration of Mehmed's defeated rival Musa in Rumeli (1411–1413). Bedreddin's rebellion, spanning two continents and centered in areas that had been particularly active during the civil war, was finally put down after much loss of blood. As for Mustafa, the Byzantine Emperor agreed to keep him in captivity for the duration of Mehmed's reign.

On his deathbed, Mehmed Çelebi was still concerned with the problems of dynastic succession that had occupied him throughout his adult life. Before dying, he attempted to ensure a smooth transfer of power by appointing his son Murad (II) as his heir, while making arrangements so that his other sons would be unable to contest Murad's rule. He promised the Byzantines two of his sons who were minors as hostages—a practice that had begun during the civil war—in order to ensure that they would not release his brother Mustafa.[8] His son of the same name, 'the little' (*küçük*) Mustafa, was to remain in Anatolia while Murad ruled supreme in Rumeli. But these arrangements failed, for Murad refused to hand over his young brothers to the Byzantine Emperor, who in turn responded by releasing 'the false' Mustafa. In a vain effort to prevent another bloody war of succession, Murad's regime tried to present Mustafa as an impostor (which is how he got the epithet); but Mustafa launched a serious revolt in the area around Izmir (Smyrna), where he was assisted by Cüneyd, a local magnate who had emerged in the aftermath of 1402 as a semi-independent actor. Murad II's throne was only secure after the elimination of both Mustafas (1423).[9]

It is thus clear even from a brief survey of the reigns of Mehmed I and Murad II that many of the challenges they faced had deep roots in the civil war of 1402–1413, and can only be understood in its context. While it is true that by 1453 the Ottomans were able to make a remarkable recovery from their defeat at Ankara and conquer Constantinople, thereby inaugurating the so-called "classical period" of Ottoman history, the long and divisive civil war left a deep mark on Ottoman political culture and historical consciousness. As he prepared for his Balkan campaigns of 1443–1444, Murad II still doubted the loyalty of the Rumelian frontier lords (*uc begleri*), speaking of how they

[8] The practice of taking royal hostages as an assurance of loyalty was common both in Byzantium and in the early Ottoman state, but there is no known case before 1402 of an Ottoman prince being handed over to the Byzantine Emperor.

[9] Halil İnalcık, "Meḥemmed I," EI^2, 976–977; J.H. Kramers, "Murād II," EI^2, 594–595.

had betrayed his uncle Musa.[10] Most importantly, until the adoption of a succession system based on seniority in the early seventeenth century, the Ottomans still struggled with the problem of dynastic succession. Specifically for the Ottoman civil war beginning in 1402, Halil İnalcık has pointed out that "that the struggle for the throne among the descendants of Bayezid I ended only after the conquest of Constantinople."[11] Even after the legalization of dynastic fratricide in Mehmed II's lawcode (*ḳānūnnāme*), the practice remained a controversial one until it was discontinued in the seventeenth century.[12]

Understanding the civil war of 1402–1413 is an essential prerequisite for understanding the development of the Ottoman Empire. The present work is the first full-length study of the period in question. Its aim is twofold: to provide a reliable narrative of the events of the years 1402–1413 (the first of its kind) and to identify and discuss some of the major themes and problems that emerge from the study of this period of Ottoman history. As the sources are much richer than has been generally recognized, the present work does not pretend to exhaust them, but rather to point the direction for future research. It is hoped that it will prepare the ground for a larger discussion of the role of the succession struggles of the interregnum in the development of the Ottoman Empire.

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[10] Halil İnalcık and Mevlûd Oğuz, *Gazavât-ı Sultân Murâd b. Mehemmed Hân: İzladi ve Varna Savaşlari (1443–1444) Üzerinde Anonim Gazavâtnâme* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1978), 13.

[11] Halil İnalcık, "Ottoman Methods of Conquest," *Studia Islamica* 2 (1954): 103–129, 106 note 2. As late as 1444, the young Mehmed II was challenged by a certain Orhan, probably a grandson of Bayezid I. See also Halil İnalcık, *Fatih Devri Üzerinde Tetkikler ve Vesikalar* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1954), 69–70.

[12] For the clause on fratricide in Mehmed II's *ḳānūnnāme*, see Abdülkadir Özcan, "Fâtih'in Teşkilât Kanunnâmesi ve Nizam-ı Âlem için Kardeş Katli Meselesi," *Tarih Dergisi* 33 (1980–1981): 19. A recent study of Ottoman dynastic succession in the classical period is Nicolas Vatin and Gilles Veinstein, *Le sérail ébranlé* (Paris: Fayard, 2003). Evidence of opposition to fratricide on moral grounds as late as 1595 is provided by Mustafa Âli's account of the universal mourning in Istanbul when the coffins of Mehmed III's young brothers were brought out of the palace upon his accession. See Cornell H. Fleischer, *Bureaucrat and Intellectual in the Ottoman Empire: The Historian Mustafa Âli (1541–1600)* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), 152, 298.

International Relations in the Ottoman Civil War

The politics of the Ottoman dynastic wars were extremely complex, and involved many neighboring states and foreign powers. Perhaps the best way to paint a picture of the situation is by describing the composition of the army with which Mehmed Çelebi won his decisive victory at Çamurlu (5 July 1413) against his brother Musa (see chapter 5). In preparation for that battle, Mehmed brought with him an army from Anatolia consisting largely of Tatars and Turcomans, including forces under the command of his brother-in-law, the prince of Dulkadır. This army was ferried across the straits by the Byzantine Emperor, who added to it some of his own troops. Then, in the long buildup to the battle, further contingents joined under various Turkish lords of the marches (*uc begleri*), the Byzantine governor of Thessaloniki, and the Serbian despot Stefan Lazarević, whose army is reported to have included Bosnians and Hungarians. And that was only one battle, in which many other powers that had played a role in the Ottoman civil war did not take part.

Let us briefly review the international situation that prevailed after 1402. The Ottoman defeat at Ankara had immediate consequences for the entire region. When Bayezid was captured by Timur, his imperial ambitions which had caused alarm in many quarters came to a sudden end. Before the Battle of Ankara, the Byzantine capital of Constantinople had been on the verge of surrendering to Bayezid after a long siege.[13] In this light, it is not surprising that when Timur appeared unexpectedly on the eastern borders of Bayezid's empire, the Byzantines saw the event as an act of divine providence.[14] Constantinople was a city of immense strategic importance, situated at the crossroads of two continents and two seas and surrounded by some of the most powerful fortifications the world had ever seen. Without Constantinople, it was impossible for Bayezid to fully control the straits of the Dardanelles and the Bosphorus, which meant that he could never be completely sure of

[13] On Bayezid's siege of Constantinople see Dionysios Hadjopoulos, "Le premier siège de Constantinople par les Ottomans de 1394 à 1402" (PhD dissertation, Université de Montréal, 1980).

[14] Paul Gautier, "Action de grâces de Démétrius Chrysoloras à la Theotocos pour l'anniversaire de la bataille d'Ankara (28 juillet 1403)," *Revue des Études Byzantines* 19 (1961): 340–357. The consequences of the Battle of Ankara for Byzantium have been studied by Klaus-Peter Matschke in *Die Schlacht bei Ankara und das Schicksal von Byzanz: Studien zur spätbyzantinischen Geschichte zwischen 1402 und 1422* (Weimar: Bohlau, 1981).

his ability to cross swiftly with a large army from one half of his empire to the other.

Upon Timur's departure from Anatolia, Bayezid's sons found themselves surrounded by hostile neighbors. In order to consolidate his power over Rumeli, Bayezid's eldest son Süleyman was forced to make extensive concessions to Byzantium and other Christian powers there.[15] Had the Ottomans' Christian and Muslim enemies in Rumeli and Anatolia succeeded in uniting against them, it is quite possible that they could have destroyed them once and for all. But this did not happen, for those powers were deeply divided. In the Christian Orthodox communities of the Balkans, such as the Byzantines and Serbs, there was deep anti-Latin sentiment, which had led to the creation of a pro-Ottoman faction. As a result of such divisions, any effort to limit the power of the Ottoman princes could at best enjoy only moderate success. Following the principle of divide and conquer, the Byzantine Emperor, the Voivoda of Wallachia, and the *beg*s of Western Anatolia played the game of supporting one Ottoman prince against another, thus hoping to prevent the rise of another Yıldırım Bayezid. The Byzantines especially were quite adept at this game, and were able to hold on to Constantinople and prolong the life of their state for fifty years after 1402.

Other Christian states were motivated by very different interests from those of Byzantium. The Italian merchant republics of Venice and Genoa were concerned first and foremost with securing the safety of their Levantine trade. Throughout the civil war, their policy was to sign treaties with whichever Ottoman prince was in the best position to guarantee those interests. Inasmuch as a powerful Ottoman ruler such as Yıldırım Bayezid could endanger their colonial outposts, the position of Venice was similar to that of Byzantium, Wallachia, and other powers threatened by Ottoman expansion. But unlike Byzantium, in this period the Venetian senate was willing to make deals with the Ottomans against various enemies that posed a more immediate danger, such as Balša in Albania.

Several smaller powers of Rumeli, such as the Serbian lords Stefan Lazarević and George Branković and the lord of Cephalonia Carlo Tocco, also sought Ottoman military assistance against their enemies during this time. Indeed, that was how the Ottomans had been able

[15] On Süleyman's reign, see Elizabeth A. Zachariadou, "Süleyman Çelebi in Rumili and the Ottoman Chronicles," *Der Islam* 60.2 (1983): 268–296.

to prevail in Rumeli in the first place. As is well-known, the Ottomans first crossed the straits separating Asia from Europe as mercenaries on the side of John VI Kantakouzenos during his power struggle with John V Palaiologos, known as the Byzantine civil war (1341–1354).[16] After occupying the important port city of Gallipoli following an earthquake, they were able to expand rapidly due to the political fragmentation that they had encountered in the region. What began as mere raiding evolved gradually into a specific method of conquest, which involved first establishing suzerainty over local lords by making alliances with them against their enemies, and later incorporating their lands into the sphere of direct Ottoman administration.[17]

Although a Byzantine emperor had been responsible for inviting the Ottomans into Europe, by 1402 it was clear that Ottoman expansion posed a threat to the very existence of Byzantium. Emperor Manuel II Palaiologos (r. 1391–1425), who reached maturity during this time, made great efforts to prevent political fragmentation within his family and to unite Christendom against Ottoman expansion.[18] The same was true also of the Hungarian king Sigismund, who in 1396 had organized the last Crusade of the Middle Ages against the Ottomans.[19] But Bayezid's army had easily defeated the Crusaders. Moreover, after his defeat Sigismund was preoccupied with various challenges from his own noblemen and a rival contender to the throne, Ladislas of Naples. Hungarian involvement in the Ottoman succession wars was therefore indirect, and exerted mostly through Sigismund's vassals, especially Mircea of Wallachia and Stefan Lazarević.

As for the Turkish *beylik*s of Anatolia, after Timur's departure they were unable to pursue an independent foreign policy. Instead, like the Christian powers of Rumeli, they tried to gain whatever they could out of an alliance with one or another of the Ottoman princes, siding with whichever happened to be the weakest at the time, in the hope

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[16] Nicholas Oikonomides, "From Soldiers of Fortune to Gazi Warriors: the Tzympe Affair," in *Studies in Ottoman history in honour of Professor V.L. Ménage*, ed. Colin Heywood and Colin Imber (Istanbul: Isis, 1994), 239–248.

[17] Halil İnalcık, "Ottoman Methods of Conquest;" idem, "Stefan Duşan'dan Osmanlı İmparatorluğuna," in *Fuad Köprülü Armağanı: 60. Doğum Yılı Münasebetiyle: Mélanges Fuad Köprülü* (Istanbul: Osman Yalçın Matbaası, 1953), 211–212.

[18] John W. Barker, *Manuel II Palaeologus (1391–1425): A Study in Late Byzantine Statemanship* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1968).

[19] On the crusade of Nicopolis, see Aziz Atiya, *The Crusade of Nicopolis* (London: Methuen, 1934).

of preventing any one of them from becoming too powerful. But as Halil İnalcık has pointed out, by this time in their history the Ottomans had already become the greatest power in the area, to which all others turned to guarantee their position and resolve their differences. This was true as much for the Turkish *beylik*s of Anatolia as it was for the various Christian lords of the Balkans. Another important point to bear in mind is that the Ottoman prebendal land tenure system (the *tīmār*, hereafter *timar*) was already fully operational under Bayezid I, which meant that after 1402, many *timar* holders had an interest in maintaining a stable Ottoman central administration that could guarantee their privileges.[20]

International relations during the Ottoman civil war are thus best characterized as dictated by opportunism on the part of everyone involved. The Ottomans' neighbors switched sides frequently, allying themselves first with one, then with another of the Ottoman princes in an effort to gain something, or at least avoid losing everything. But their interests rarely coincided. In all the struggles of the civil war, only once did the majority of political actors join together in a common cause, rallying to the side of Mehmed Çelebi in 1413 against his brother Musa, whose aggressive policies had brought back for them the darkest moments of Bayezid I's reign in Rumeli. But in supporting Mehmed against Musa, Byzantium and Hungary ended up undermining their own policy of divide and conquer. As a result, by 1413 it was clear to all that despite the disaster at Ankara, the Ottomans were still the dominant power in the region. Of course, as we have already seen, the efforts of Byzantium and other powers to limit Ottoman power and expansion did not end in 1413. But a great opportunity had been lost, and forty years later another Ottoman Sultan would realize Bayezid's imperial ambitions and conquer Constantinople. The reign of Mehmed II (1451–1481) saw the consolidation of the Ottoman state into a formidable world empire, larger, more powerful, and more coherent than the one created by Bayezid I.

[20] Halil İnalcık, "Meḥemmed I," 977.

The Civil War and Ottoman Society

The Ottoman dynastic struggles were full-scale civil wars involving the entire society over which the rival princes strove to establish their rule. In navigating the turbulent and changing waters that prevailed after the collapse of Bayezid I's empire, the Ottoman princes and their advisers had to take into account internal political actors at least as much as the foreign powers mentioned above. The importance of internal dynamics is best illustrated by the revolt of Şeyh Bedreddin. As we saw above, Bedreddin's involvement in politics dates to the reign of Musa Çelebi (1411–1413), who appointed Şeyh Bedreddin as his head military judge (*ḳāḍī 'askar*, hereafter *kazasker*). Musa owed his rise to power in Rumeli largely to the raiders there (*akıncı* or *ġāzī*, hereafter *gazi*), so his appointment of Bedreddin is probably no coincidence, since apart from being a great scholar and mystic the *şeyh* was also a genuine product of the frontier *milieu* of Rumeli. Şeyh Bedreddin's father was one of the first *gazi*s who crossed the straits into Rumeli: he had conquered the small Byzantine town of Ammovounon (Sımavna) with its castle and married the daughter of its Christian lord (*tekvūr*).[21] Coming as he did from such a mixed frontier environment, Bedreddin appears to have enjoyed wide support among various segments of Ottoman society, both Muslim and Christian.

Due to this wide biconfessional support, Bedreddin's uprising has been presented in modern Turkish historiography and popular culture as a proto-communist revolt, especially after the publication of the Turkish poet Nâzım Hikmet's epic on the subject.[22] While such a presentation is clearly anachronistic, there is nevertheless a kernel of truth in it, since Bedreddin's revolt appears indeed to reflect certain social tensions created by the Ottoman empire-building project and intensified by the civil war. Bedreddin's patron Musa Çelebi apparently enjoyed great popularity with certain segments of the population, notably the lower ranks of the *akıncı* and the *kul*, while others felt threatened by his policies and worked at engineering his demise. The latter category included the powerful frontier lords (*uc begleri*) of Rumeli, as well as certain high functionaries of the government, such as Musa's

[21] Cemal Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds: The Construction of the Ottoman State* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 143.

[22] Nâzım Hikmet, *Sımavna Kadısı Oğlu Şeyh Bedreddin Destanı* (Ankara: Dost Yayınları, 1966).

grand vizier, Çandarlı İbrahim Paşa. Apart from attacking his Christian neighbors, Musa had also sought to destroy the power of those elites in order to increase the authority of the central state. In fact, his policies bear a striking resemblence to those of his father Bayezid, who was criticized by some for undermining *gazi* authority while strengthening that of his own slaves (*kul*), and by others for going against the Ottoman policy of gradual conquest, which was based on moderate policies toward the neighboring Christian states. Those policies had already become associated with the Çandarlı family of grand viziers, whose last important representative Çandarlı Halil Paşa was executed in 1453 for opposing the conquest of Constantinople.[23]

Several prominent historians of the Ottoman Empire have made the point that the disaster at Ankara brought to the surface internal social and political divisions created by Ottoman expansion and centralization during the reigns of Murad I (1362–1389) and Bayezid I.[24] For those opposed to Bayezid's project of turning the Ottoman state into a centralized empire on the Seljuk or Byzantine model, his defeat at the hands of Timur was proof that his policies were seriously flawed. By far the most important criticism levelled against Bayezid I was his use of janissaries and Christian vassals to attack and incorporate the Muslim *beylik*s of Anatolia. Indeed, the fact that a ruler blessed by God with the conquest of new lands for Islam was fighting against other Muslims was thought to constitute nothing less than hubris. A related point which has received less attention concerns the revival of Central Asian nomadic political traditions in Anatolia following Timur's invasion. Timur's political ideology was founded on the Chingizid political order in its Islamic form, as represented by the Ilkhanid Mongol appanage state in Iran. Following the defeat of the Seljuks of Rum at the Battle of Kösedağ (1243), large parts of Anatolia had came under the direct rule of the Ilkhanids, who had sent a governor to Sivas (1277). Although Mongol direct rule in Anatolia had not lasted long, it had left its imprint on an area inhabited largely by Turks of nomadic background (Turcomans), who like the Ottomans' own ancestors had migrated there in the 1220s–1230s fleeing the Chingizid conquests further east.

From the beginning of their history, then, the Ottomans were no strangers to Central Asian political culture; indeed, they were native

[23] See İnalcık, "Ottoman Methods of Conquest," 104–105.
[24] On this point, see Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds*, 112.

to it. However, as the Mongol threat grew weaker in the course of the fourteenth century, they adapted to local conditions on the Byzantine border, first in Bithynia and then in the Balkans. Eventually, like the Seljuk rulers before them and inspired by their example, they came to see themselves as sedentary rulers. They forged alliances with their Christian neighbors by marrying into the Balkan nobility, and created slave armies and courts by converting Christian peasants and prisoners of war into janissaries and servants of the Porte (*kapı kulu*). But as their realms expanded during the reigns of Murad I and Bayezid I, once again the Ottomans came face to face with the larger post-Mongol Islamic world as represented by the Mamluks of Egypt, the Akkoyunlu and Karakoyunlu tribal confederations of eastern Anatolia and western Iran, the ruler of Sivas Kadı Burhaneddin, and eventually the great nomadic conqueror Timur himself. Their response to these challenges was to adopt as much as possible the political language and ideology of those enemies, while still emphasizing their own uniqueness as the *gazi* conquerors of Rumeli. Needless to say, the Ottomans' various claims to legitimacy were not entirely compatible. Easterners absorbed into the Ottoman state criticized the historical validity of Ottoman policies and institutions (unlike Timur, the Ottomans adopted the title *khan* without having even the slightest connection to the Chingizid family) while the *gazi*s of Rumeli condemned 'innovations' brought in from the east, such as land surveys and tax registers. After 1402, given the prestige that Timur enjoyed and the fear that he inspired as the absolute winner of the confrontation with the Ottomans, it was only natural that people in the Ottoman realm with whom Chingizid political ideas still resonated would feel empowered.

Any examination of the social divisions brought about by the Ottoman defeat at Ankara and the ensuing civil war is inseperable from modern historical treatments of this period of Ottoman history. The founding father of the field is without a doubt Paul Wittek, whose famous "gaza thesis" has inspired generations of Ottoman historians, but still remains controversial. It is a good idea to deal with the controversy now, as it pertains to the period under consideration.

Paul Wittek's Thesis and its Critics

The broader importance of the early fifteenth century succession wars for Ottoman history has been emphasized by many scholars, notably Halil İnalcık, who has stated that for this period "the fundamental question is to ascertain how the Ottoman state re-emerged as the dominant power in Anatolia and the Balkans under the most adverse conditions after the disaster of 1402."[25] However, the existing scholarly literature is confined to a few articles, which while helpful in elucidating aspects of this extremely complicated period, lack a broad enough scope to create an overall impression of the events and their meaning for Ottoman history. Without such an overall view, it is impossible to adequately address İnalcık's question.

The first modern scholar to draw attention to the period following 1402 for the rise of the Ottoman Empire was the great philologist and historian Paul Wittek. In 1938, Wittek delivered a series of lectures at the Sorbonne which were published in the same year under the title "De la défaite d'Ankara à la prise de Constantinople."[26] As suggested by its title, Wittek's work is not really about the civil war *per se*, but about the transformation of the early Ottoman principality into an empire during the reign of Bayezid I, its collapse after Ankara, and its gradual recovery which led eventually to the capture of Constantinople in 1453. This broad scope is one of the merits of Wittek's essay, but also one of its shortcomings. "De la défaite d'Ankara à la prise de Constantinople" has been criticized by Colin Imber for its sweeping generalizations, many of which do not hold up to close scrutiny.[27] In Imber's words, the work's "seemingly mesmeric effect appears to derive from the fact that it provides a coherent—or fairly coherent—explanation for the events of an obscure and complex period, and to challenge its thesis requires a knowledge of diverse and fragmentary

[25] İnalcık, "Meḥemmed I," 977. İnalcık was not the first to pose the question; for an early example, see Herbert Adams Gibbons, *The Foundation of the Ottoman Empire: A History of the Osmanlis up to the Death of Bayezid I (1300–1403)* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1916), 260–262. For some useful insights on the period see Colin Imber, *The Ottoman Empire 1300–1650: The Structure of Power* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire, and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002).

[26] Paul Wittek, "De la défaite d'Ankara à la prise de Constantinople," *Revue des Études Islamiques* 12 (1938): 1–34.

[27] Colin Imber, "Paul Wittek's 'De la défaite d'Ankara à la prise de Constantinople,'" *Osmanlı Araştırmaları* 5 (1986): 291–304.

source material in a number of difficult languages."[28] Before discussing Imber's criticisms, let us examine Wittek's claims in more detail.

Wittek's lectures on the defeat at Ankara came only two years after a previous lecture series at the Sorbonne, and one year after his famous 1937 lectures in London, published as *The Rise of the Ottoman Empire*.[29] When he delivered these lectures, Wittek was working out the ideas and implications of his so-called gaza thesis, which has become the object of much scholarly debate and controversy in recent years.[30] It is clear that his attempt to address the significance of the succession wars for Ottoman history was part of the same project. Wittek is usually remembered for these published lectures, but far more important are his numerous meticulously researched scholarly articles and studies. In his lectures, Wittek was addressing a wider audience including many non-specialists, a fact that goes a long way toward explaining their "mesmeric effect" to which Imber refers. As is often the case in public lectures, the speaker was forced to oversimplify and overstate his case by generalizing and using terminology such as "holy war ideology," "the *gazi* tendency," and "the Muslim tendency" to describe the driving forces and divisions within early Ottoman society.

While Imber and other critics dismiss Wittek's ideas as deriving from "the traditions of right-wing German nationalism," this is rather unfair to a scholar of Wittek's caliber and contribution to the field, especially one who fled the rise of the Nazis in Germany.[31] Of course, one must take into account that like all historians Wittek was a product of his time, in which the terms he used did not seem as problematic as they do today. Moreover, it is clear that the author himself had

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[28] Imber, "Paul Wittek's 'De la défaite,'" 291.

[29] Paul Wittek, *The Rise of the Ottoman Empire* (London: The Royal Asiatic Society, 1938).

[30] See Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds*, 10–14, 49–50 *et passim*; Heath Lowry, *The Nature of the Early Ottoman State* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2003), 1–13. Lowry has underestimated the value of Kafadar's contribution, stating that "Kafadar has not succeeded in advancing the overall debate beyond the point at which İnalcık in 1982 made the accommodation between Wittek's "*Gazi* Thesis" and Köprülü's insistence on the basic Turkish tribal origin of the Ottomans" (12).

[31] Imber, "Paul Wittek's 'De la défaite,'" 294. Colin Heywood has also traced Paul Wittek's theories to German romantic nationlism. See Colin Heywood, "A Subterranean History: Paul Wittek (1894–1978) and the Early Ottoman State," *Die Welt des Islams* 38.3 (Nov. 1998): 386–405. For Wittek's biography, see Stanford J. Shaw, "In Memoriam: Professor Paul Wittek, 1894–1978," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 10, No. 1. (Feb., 1979), pp. 139–141.

certain reservations about the terminology that he was using.[32] As Cemal Kafadar has pointed out, regardless of whether they agree or disagree with Wittek's theory, most later commentators on the *gaza* thesis (including Imber) have accepted his terms without trying to understand the historical realities behind them.[33] In so doing, they risk throwing out the proverbial baby with the bathwater.

While Wittek's terminology and even many of his conclusions cannot be accepted today as such, the ideas that he tentatively developed in his London and Paris lectures had a stimulating effect on many Ottoman historians, encouraging them to consider and refine his paradigm of the rise of the Ottomans in light of further research. This process is exemplified by the work of Halil İnalcık and Cemal Kafadar. Thanks to İnalcık's mastery of the Ottoman chronicles and archival sources, Wittek's paradigm has been revised to produce a much more persuasive account of the rise of the Ottomans, in which the struggle between "the gazi tendency" and "the Muslim tendency" has been replaced by competition between centrifugal and centripetal elements within early Ottoman society. Even more than that of Wittek, İnalcık's paradigm is well grounded in the sources, and as we will see, his conclusions are clearly visible at the time of the Ottoman succession wars, when Bayezid I's centralizing project had collapsed. Finally, thanks to Kafadar's masterful study of the rise of the Ottomans, we now have a convincing and nuanced explanation for many of the apparent contradictions in the culture of the early Ottomans, which is based on their own literature and a detailed understanding of the historical environment in which they were operating.

One of the main principles of the school of Ottoman history represented by Wittek, İnalcık, and Kafadar is the critical use of chronicles. According to that school, apart from containing factual data that can be compared to documentary and other evidence, the early Ottoman chronicles are also mirrors of the society that produced them. Rather than seeing the chronicles' political nature as a shortcoming that ren-

[32] In a footnote, Wittek explains that by "la tendence musulmane" he is referring to the classical civilization of Islam ("*hochislamisch*"). See Wittek, "De la défaite," 4, note 1. While the idea of a classical Islamic civilization distinct from more popular ("*volkislamisch*") religious practices is now considered problematic, it was quite acceptable in Wittek's day, and was a sincere attempt on his part to address certain realities present in the sources.

[33] Cemal Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds*, 12 *et passim.*

ders them "biased," that very nature is viewed as an advantage that permits the historian capable of reading between the lines to better understand the society in question. Such is the approach followed in the present work. On the contrary, another school whose foremost representative is Colin Imber seeks to dismiss the chronicles in question as unreliable, claiming that they are little more than propaganda written several decades after the events. While it is certainly true that one must be cautious and critical, since a political agenda or message generally forms part and parcel of any historical narrative, it is this author's opinion that the existence of such an agenda does not constitute sufficient grounds to reject the narrative altogether. On the contrary, if analyzed carefully on multiple layers, such chronicles may yield not only accurate factual information, but also insights on the politics of the period in which they were written.

This is all the more important since, as we will see, the chronicle that forms the foundation of the present study was not composed in the late fifteenth century, as Imber and others allege, but in the early part of that century as an immediate response to the events of the Ottoman civil war. The narrative of the civil war followed by most Ottoman chroniclers (and therefore also by modern scholars) is an anonymous epic chronicle covering the years 1402–1413 from the perspective of the winner (namely Mehmed Çelebi, Sultan Mehmed I). This chronicle, which is analyzed in the sources section later in this introduction, originally bore a title similar to *Aḥvāl-i Sulṭān Meḥemmed* ('Affairs of Sultan Mehmed') and will henceforth be referred to as "the *Ahval*."[34] As we will see, there can be little doubt that this work is one of our most important narrative sources on the Ottoman civil war. However, since it is biased in favor of Mehmed Çelebi, in whose court it was produced, it must be used side by side with other narrative and documentary sources.

A good illustration of this methodological difference is provided by Imber's review of Wittek's article "De la défaite d'Ankara à la prise de Constantinople." The reviewer begins his critique by presenting a more or less accurate summary of Wittek's thesis, followed by a detailed refutation of his arguments from which he concludes that "Wittek's interpretation of early Ottoman history … is a false analysis, but one

[34] For a brief discussion of this source, see İnalcık, "Meḥemmed I," 974, 977. İnalcık refers to the chronicle as "the *Menāḳib-nāme*."

which has become an orthodoxy among Ottoman historians."[35] Some of Imber's points are quite valid, but others are less so.

Before discussing Imber's criticism, it is necessary to examine Wittek's arguments in detail. When discussing the circumstances surrounding Emir Süleyman's loss of power to his brother Musa Çelebi in 1410–1411, Wittek claims that "the internal situation in Rumeli seems, in effect, to have been rather critical." He points out that Süleyman is depicted by various chronicles as an effeminate prince given to bodily pleasures such as bathing and drinking wine, adding that he also married a Christian princess who was a close relative of the Byzantine Emperor. According to Wittek, "all this, and his foreign policy" (namely his conciliatory policies toward the Christian powers of Rumeli) "shows that he was following the ways of the latinized high aristocracy." That is why the gazis abandoned Süleyman and supported his brother Musa, an "austere, hard and fanatical young man" whose sad youth in the court of his brother Mehmed Çelebi had turned him into "a somber fanatic."[36]

Wittek goes on to relate that when Musa took over with the support of the disgruntled gazis, he relaunched "the holy war" and appointed as his head military judge (*kazasker*) "the same Şeyh Bedreddin who a few years later would become the leader of a vast social and religious movement which preached a sort of communism and fraternization with the Christians." But despite his popular support, Musa's "revolutionary Rumeli" was not viable, for Musa spread "a veritable terror" among "the aristocrats and high functionaries of his state," causing them to unite with his Christian enemies in support of Mehmed Çelebi. The fact that Mehmed was based in the province of Rum, which had belonged to the gazi Turkish principality of the Danişmendids, meant that he preserved his "national" character, a fact proven by his decision to marry into the tribal Turcoman family of Dulkadır, rather than take a Christian bride as Süleyman had done. According to Wittek, Mehmed's victory in the civil war was due to a great extent to his preservation of this essential "national" character.[37]

As is immediately obvious to anyone familiar with the details of the period in question, there are some serious problems with Wittek's argument. First, his emphasis on the fact that Emir Süleyman had a Chris-

[35] Imber, "Paul Wittek's 'De la défaite,'" 303.
[36] Wittek, "De la défaite," 18, 22.
[37] Wittek, "De la défaite," 18–27.

tian wife is completely unwarranted, for the practice had been common since the time of Orhan Gazi, and the gazi-supported "fanatic" Musa seems to have had not one but two Christian wives. As we will see in chapter 2, Mehmed's choice of a Turcoman bride was based solely on political considerations, since his power was located in an area with a large population of nomadic Turcomans. Second, any claim to an understanding of Musa's personal psychology and childhood in Mehmed's court amounts to little more than speculation, since it is not possible to psychoanalyze a fifteenth century Ottoman prince on the basis of scant evidence mostly produced in the court of his brother. Third, even if we accept as true that after Musa's death his *kazasker* Şeyh Bedreddin was the leader of an important social and religious movement based on ideas of common ownership, it does not necessarily follow from this alone that Musa was himself the leader of a revolutionary communist regime in Rumeli. In fact, Bedreddin's revolt is still poorly understood, which makes its anachronistic projection back in time all the more problematic. Finally, in the case of Süleyman, the fact that several chronicles hostile to that prince contain didactic stories in which he is presented as drinking in bathhouses does not in itself constitute sufficient evidence that Süleyman was overcivilized and lacking in manly virtue. On the contrary, for most of the duration of the Ottoman succession wars, Süleyman was the most successful claimant to the throne and waged many important campaigns against his brothers and the beyliks of Anatolia. As Zachariadou has pointed out, after the Battle of Ankara Süleyman's conciliatory policies toward the Christian powers of Rumeli were necessary for the Ottomans' survival in Europe.[38]

Let us see now what Imber has made of these weaknesses in Wittek's argument. A sympathetic but impartial reviewer would have had every reason to identify them for what they are, namely gross inaccuracies and exaggerations, while also recognizing that they represent attempts to get at something real that is present in the sources. However Imber fails to find anything plausible in Wittek's argument, rejecting it altogether. He interprets the hostility of the Ottoman chronicles toward Yıldırım Bayezid's wife Olivera as mere scapegoating whose aim is to explain the disaster at Ankara, and their even greater animosity toward the Çandarlı family of viziers as a retrospective projec-

[38] See Zachariadou, "Süleyman Çelebi," 296.

tion of the political climate following the execution of Çandarlı Halil Paşa in 1453. However, it is quite clear that these attitudes are much older than the second half of the fifteenth century, and that their origin should be sought instead in popular reaction against the imperial project of Bayezid I. As we will see below, the *Ahval*, which should be dated to Mehmed I's reign (1402–1421), also contains several stories in which Çandarlı Ali Paşa appears as the villain. It is thus impossible to accept Imber's assertion that the negative presentation of Ali Paşa in various Ottoman chronicles is due to "anti-Çandarlı propaganda which dated from after 1453."[39]

Similarly, in the case of Musa and Şeyh Bedreddin, Imber's evaluation that "Wittek's account of Musa's reign is completely illogical" does not change the fact that there were clearly complex social forces at work behind that prince's rise to power. While it is of course anachronistic to present Musa as a communist revolutionary, Wittek is correct to point out that his rise to power presents "a completely particular character," since it can be attributed largely to the support of certain social groups such as the raiders (*akıncı*) and other fighters of Rumeli who were displeased with Süleyman's peaceful policies.[40] Moreover, these raiders seem to have held certain egalitarian, anti-aristocratic beliefs that Musa exploited during his reign in order to weaken the power of the frontier lords of Rumeli, who were by this time in Ottoman history already becoming a kind of local nobility. As for Şeyh Bedreddin, he was the son of a raider and a Byzantine lady and the leader of a mystical order, apparently with a significant following among both Christians and Muslims. Seen in that light, it is unlikely that Musa appointed him as his *kazasker* simply because he was "a renowned jurist," as Imber claims.[41] Bedreddin was indeed a renowned jurist, but it is surely significant that at the end of the Ottoman succession wars he was imprisoned by Mehmed I in the same prison as the important frontier lord Mihal-oğlı Mehmed, only to escape three years later and lead a revolt centered in the very region where Musa had achieved his strongest popular support. It is obvious that both men were viewed as dangerous by Mehmed I's regime because of their popular following in Rumeli.

In conclusion, while it is difficult to accept Wittek's presentation of the Ottoman succession wars as such, it would be an equally grave

[39] Imber, "Paul Wittek's 'De la défaite,'" 294.
[40] Wittek, "De la défaite," 20.
[41] Imber, "Paul Wittek's 'De la défaite,'" 299–302.

mistake to reject it outright. Despite its overgeneralizations, it contains many elements of truth which are well founded in the sources. In fact, one of the aims of the present study is to test Wittek's ideas on early Ottoman society through a careful study of the sources and politics of the early fifteenth century. Whatever the weaknesses in his presentation of the events of the Ottoman civil wars of 1402–1413, Wittek was right about one thing: to do justice to those events it is necessary to study them within the larger context of early Ottoman history. What is needed is a solid, source-based understanding of the political and institutional history of the Ottoman state going back at least as far as the reign of Bayezid I, and ending with that of Mehmed II the Conqueror (1451–1481). Unfortunately, for a variety of reasons, such an understanding is still lacking.

Perhaps the greatest obstacle is the absence of sufficient and reliable sources on the first century of Ottoman history, which coincides with the fourteenth century of the common era. The situation is especially bad for the first half of that period, when the Ottomans were still in Anatolia and had not yet attracted much international attention (1300–1354); but it gradually improves with time, so that it should be possible to write the history of the decades before the disaster of 1402 in much greater detail than has so far been attempted. In fact, most of what has been written on this period is in response to the controversy created by Wittek's gaza thesis. The most recent works on the subject are Cemal Kafadar's *Between Two Worlds* and Heath Lowry's *The Nature of the Early Ottoman State*, both extended essays on the question of Ottoman origins.[42] Of the two, Lowry's is the more polemical work, since the author attempts to disprove Wittek's thesis by criticizing his use of the sources. Instead, Kafadar's work should be seen as a largely successful attempt to paint a more nuanced picture of the early Ottoman world, in addition to dealing with the modern considerations that have dictated much of the debate over who the early Ottomans really were. Yet despite the lively debate created by such studies, we are still far from knowing all that we would like to know about Ottoman history before 1402. What is needed, in fact, are detailed monographs on the reigns of individual Ottoman sultans, making use of all the available sources regardless of language. For Sultans Murad I (1362–1389) and Bayezid I (1389–1402) such monographs have yet to be attempted, even though those sultans

[42] See notes 21 and 30 above for the citations of these two works.

reigned during the transformation of the Ottoman principality into an empire. For the reigns of Mehmed I (1413–1421) and Murad II (1421–1444, 1446–1453), some work has been done, but this is still in the form of unpublished doctoral dissertations not yet readily available.[43]

If the above is an accurate assessment of the state of early Ottoman history in general, it is especially true for the civil war of 1402–1413. In view of the primitive state of the field, it is the primary objective of the present work to make available a detailed narrative of the Ottoman civil war. As will become apparent below, the events of this period are extremely complicated, and the sources available for its study are disparate, fragmentary, and in many different languages. While the publication and study of some of these sources began as early as the nineteenth century, often this work is only available in the form of journal articles that are difficult to obtain. To the extent possible, an effort has therefore been made to take into account most of the available published sources. I have not attempted to locate undiscovered and unpublished archival material, since such material for the period in question is very rare and would have been difficult to find. As we will see in a moment when we turn to a detailed presentation of the sources, the published narrative and documentary sources are more than adequate for the work at hand. As for the secondary literature, the most important articles and studies concerning the period in question have also been taken into account.[44]

As has already been suggested, the present study is largely an attempt to create a reliable chronological narrative of the Ottoman civil war, beginning with the Battle of Ankara (28 July 1402) and ending with the reunification of the Ottoman territory under Mehmed I (5 July 1413). To date such a narrative has been totally lacking, and the few surveys of the period in articles and works of general Ottoman history are often confusing and contradictory. Nevertheless, it must be acknowledged that several prominent Ottoman historians have made serious efforts to disentangle various aspects of the succession struggles of the civil war,

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[43] On the reign of Murad II, see Antonis Xanthynakis, "Η Βασιλεία του Οθωμανού Σουλτάνου Μουράτ Β'" ("The Reign of Ottoman Sultan Murad II"), (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Crete, May 2003). Nenad Filipović of Princeton University has been writing a dissertation on Mehmed I, which at the time of writing is not yet available.

[44] The only exception are works in languages that I cannot read, such as Nedim Filipović's book *Princ Musa i Šejh Bedreddin* (Sarajevo: Svjetlost, 1971). Since I do not read Serbocroatian, it would be unfair for me to comment on the contents of this book, which is written from a Marxist perspective.

thereby making the task of producing an overall narrative much more manageable than it would otherwise have been. Prior to the present work, and apart from Wittek's article which as we saw above is actually the transcript of a public lecture, two articles stood out as representing the state of the art on the civil war: Elizabeth Zachariadou's article on Süleyman Çelebi, and Halil İnalcık's entry on Mehmed I in the Encyclopedia of Islam (new edition).[45]

Besides Paul Wittek's article, Elizabeth Zachariadou's is probably the most frequently cited work on the period in question, and justly so. Zachariadou's mastery of Byzantine, Venetian, and other Western European documentary sources makes her work very valuable, since such sources are often overlooked by Ottoman historians. Moreover, as the title of her article suggests, Zachariadou has made a point of using these sources side by side with the Ottoman chronicles. Unfortunately, she has failed to take into account the contemporary nature of some of these chronicles, which makes them particularly important for reconstructing the events and political culture of the civil war. Specifically, she treates the *Ahval* as the work of Neşri, dismissing it with the words: "Ottoman narrative sources do not seem trustworthy as far as the period of the interregnum is concerned apart from their bias in favour of Mehemmed" and "the earliest Ottoman historians dealing with that period—mainly Neshri—wrote several decades after Süleyman's death."[46] While it is true that Neşri's chronicle was written at the turn of the sixteenth century, it has been accepted for a long time that it is a compilation of older sources, at least one of which (the *Ahval*) is clearly contemporary to the events that it describes. As we will see in chapter 2, Zachariadou's decision not to follow the chronicles but to rely primarily on "strictly contemporary" documentary sources led her to the erroneous conclusion that İsa Çelebi was killed by Emir Süleyman, after the two brothers tried unsuccessfully to attack Timur as he was withdrawing from Anatolia. Nevertheless, Zachariadou's emphasis on documentary sources resulted in many important conclusions about Emir Süleyman's reign, which cast doubt on the rather negative way in which he is presented in the Ottoman chronicles.

The content and approach of Zachariadou's article on Emir Süleyman is complemented nicely by Halil İnalcık's one on Mehmed I.

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[45] Elizabeth Zachariadou, "Süleyman Çelebi in Rumili and the Ottoman Chronicles"; Halil İnalcık, "Meḥemmed I," EI².

[46] Zachariadou, "Süleyman Çelebi," 268.

While the article in question was written as an encyclopedia entry, it deserves to be treated as the main scholarly contribution on the subject, as it has been until now the best available study of the Ottoman civil war and its significance.[47] The author's unparalleled understanding of all aspects of early Ottoman history make his work essential reading for anyone interested in the subject, and by and large his conclusions are confirmed by the present study. İnalcık shows great sensitivity to the political context after Ankara, the political challenge posed by Timur, and the role of foreign powers. Unlike Zachariadou, he insists on the value of the *Ahval*, whose importance for early Ottoman history and historiography he has emphasized repeatedly in articles and conferences.[48]

The Sources

It should be clear by now that one of the greatest challenges posed by the study of the civil war is that of sources and source criticism. The sources for the civil war are many and varied, reflecting the political complexity and fragmentation of the period. They include chronicles and other literary works of a historical nature, travel narratives, diplomatic and administrative documents, coins, and inscriptions. These sources are in languages as varied as Turkish, Persian, Greek, Latin, Spanish, Old Serbian, and Venetian dialect. Needless to say, this diversity of sources makes great demands on the historian, since a source's meaning can often hinge on the interpretation of a single word.

This much said, the interpretation of the sources on the Ottoman civil war does not depend on philological skills alone. It has long been

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[47] Many of Halil İnalcık's entries in the Encyclopedia of Islam are in fact substantial original articles in their own right. The same is also true of his article "Bāyazīd I" cited above, which in many ways represents the state of the art on that sultan's reign. Another article by İnalcık that is essential reading for anyone trying to understand the reign of Bayezid I is his review of Barker's *Manuel II Palaeologus* in *Archivum Ottomanicum* 3 (1971): 272–285.

[48] See Halil İnalcık, "Klasik Edebiyatın Menşei," *Türk Edebiyat Tarihi* (Istanbul: Kültür Bakanligi Yayinlari, 2006): 221–283. In a recorded address to a conference in his honor organized jointly by the Centers for Middle Eastern Studies of Harvard and the University of Chicago, İnalcık stated that the *Ahval* should be published as a separate book ("In Honor of Professor Halil Inalcik: Methods and Sources in Ottoman Studies," Harvard University, 29 April – 2 May 2004). In fact, my edition and translation of this chronicle is forthcoming in *Sources of Oriental Languages and Literatures*. This edition was originally included as an appendix to the doctoral dissertation on which the present book is based.

recognized that the composition of the first Ottoman historical narratives dates to the period beginning in 1402 and ending in the first years of Murad II's reign, namely the civil war and its immediate aftermath.[49] The Timurid *débâcle* and the collapse of the empire of Bayezid I, many of whose policies had been controversial, followed by the protracted political crisis represented by the civil war all resulted in a strong need for the Ottomans to legitimize their position *vis-à-vis* rival Islamic states. Thus two of the earliest surviving Ottoman historical narratives deal directly with the events of the civil war, while others composed around the same time are preoccupied with the presentation and evaluation of Ottoman history before Ankara.[50] Since chronicles and related literary works mirror the historical consciousness and political ideals of the societies in which they were produced, a detailed analysis of such texts is an indispensable part of any effort to understand the civil war and its significance. As discussed above, it would be naive to make use of these texts as mere sources for an *histoire événementielle* without first understanding the political culture that created them. Indeed, such an understanding often holds the key to explaining why events are distorted or presented in a certain light.

The production of historical narratives in the courts of the warring Ottoman princes was part and parcel of the civil war. Some of these narratives pose a particular problem, however, for they do not survive as independent texts, but only as incorporated into later compilations. Well known examples of such compilations are Neşri's *Kitāb-ı Cihān-nümā*, the chronicle of Aşıkpaşazade which contains chapters attributed to Yahşi Fakih, and the many anonymous manuscripts known collectively as the Ottoman Anonymous Chronicles (*Tevārīḫ-i Āl-i ʿOs̱mān*).[51] Much of what is contained in the early Ottoman chronicles thus reflects a process of copying and compilation, which often makes it difficult to discern when a particular passage was written and by whom, and whether it was copied more or less accurately, or tampered with to serve particular narrative or ideological goals.[52]

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[49] Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds*, 95–96.

[50] The Anonymous *Ahval* in Neşri and the Oxford Anonymous Chronicle, and the epic poem on the Battle of Çamurlu in Abdülvasi Çelebi's *Ḥalīlnāme*. For full citations, see the relevant section below, as well as the philological appendix.

[51] For full citations of the chronicles, see the section on sources below. On Yahşi Fakih, see V.L. Ménage, "The Menakib of Yakhshi Fakih," *BSOAS* 26 (1963): 50–54.

[52] For a pioneering study of the transformations that sometimes took place during this process of compilation, see Paul Wittek, "The Taking of Aydos Castle: a Ghazi

As explained above, many of the historians who have dealt with the civil war to date have fallen into one of two traps with regard to the Ottoman chronicles: they have either rejected them as unreliable, or they have taken their information at face value. Painstaking as it may be, the only way to deal with the elusive narratives of the civil war, Ottoman or otherwise, is by comparing them with one another, and whenever possible checking them against "hard" sources such as documents, coins, and inscriptions. Before turning to the chronicles, let us first examine these "hard" sources.

Documentary, Numismatic, and Epigraphic Sources

The most important documentary sources on the civil war are cited by Zachariadou in her article on Süleyman.[53] They include the deliberations of the Venetian senate, in which numerous references are made to the sons of Yıldırım Bayezid and their relations with the *Serenissima*. Many of these senatorial documents have been published in numerous publications dating back to the nineteenth century, and most of them have been summarized in French by Freddy Thiriet.[54] Thiriet's work is very useful, but his summaries must be used with extreme caution, as they contain errors and are in any case only partial. The most complete and reliable publication of Venetian senatorial documents pertaining to the Ottoman civil war is Giuseppe Valentini's *Acta Albaniae Veneta* (AAV), which provides the full text of the documents in the original Latin.[55]

Apart from the records of the Venetian senate, other published documentary sources in Latin include the expense accounts of the Genoese colony of Pera and various documents from the archives of Ragusa (Dubrovnik). The expense accounts of Pera were partially edited by Nicolae Iorga in the first volume of his *Notes et éxtraits pour servir à l'histoire des croisades au xve siècle*, published originally in volume 4 of the periodical

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Legend and its Transformation," in *Arabic and Islamic Studies in Honor of H.A.R. Gibb*, ed. G. Makdisi (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1965): 662–672. See also Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds*, 90–105 *et passim*.

[53] See Zachariadou, "Süleyman Çelebi," 269, note 3.

[54] F. Thiriet, *Régestes des Délibérations du Sénat de Venise concernant la Romanie*, vol. 2: 1364–1463 (Paris: Mouton, 1958–1961).

[55] Giuseppe Valentini, ed., *Acta Albaniae Veneta Saeculorum XIV. et XV.* (Palermo: Giuseppe Tosini; Milan: P.I.M.E.; Munich, R. Trofenik, 1967–), vols. 1–7.

Revue de l'Orient Latin (ROL).[56] It is this publication that has been consulted for the present work. As for the Ragusan documents, two important collections are available: Jovan Radonić, *Acta et Diplomata Ragusina*, and Jozsef Gelcich and Lajos Thalloczy, *Diplomatarium relationum Reipublicae Ragusanae cum regno Hungariae*.[57] Apart from these collections, other letters and documents from the Ragusan archives have been published by various scholars, which will be cited at the appropriate time. Finally, it should be stated that unlike the Venetian archives, which have been searched by many scholars and published extensively, there is a good chance that the Ragusan archives may still contain important unpublished documents relating to the civil war. As this work deals only with published sources, however, the task of locating such documents must be left for the future.[58]

Turning now to the Ottoman documentary sources, it can be said that their most distinguishing characteristic is their scarcity for the period in question. While historians dealing with later periods of Ottoman history rely regularly on edicts (*fermān*), tax registers (*taḥrīr*), judicial documents (*ḥüccet*, *sicil*) and a host of other documentary sources, these are extremely rare before the reign of Murad II (1421–1451), and become plentiful only in the second half of the fifteenth century. The first extant *taḥrīr*, which is dated 835 (1431–1432) and concerns Albania, has been published by Halil İnalcık.[59] Apart from this register, the Başbakanlık Archives in Turkey also contain an unpublished book of fief appointments (*tīmār defteri*) for the same region (specifically the districts of Premedi and Görice) and the same year.[60] Upon careful examination, these documents may in fact shed light on Ottoman land tenure in the newly conquered region of Albania during the civil war, since frequent mentions are made in them of fief appointments under Emir Süleyman and other sons of Yıldırım Bayezid. But such an examination

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[56] Iorga, Nicolae, "Notes et extraits pour servir à l'histoire des croisades au XVe siècle." *Revue de l'Orient Latin* 4 (1896): 25–118, 226–320, 503–622.

[57] Jovan Radonić, ed., *Acta et Diplomata Ragusina* (Belgrade: Mlada Srbija, 1934); Jozsef Gelcich and Lajos Thalloczy, *Diplomatarium relationum Reipublicae Ragusanae cum regno Hungariae* (Budapest: kiadja a M. Tud. Akadémia Tört. Bizottsága, 1887).

[58] Another possibility is that copies or summaries of lost documents from Venice could be located elsewhere in northern Italy, particularly in the Este archives in Ferrara and Modena. I am indebted to Suraiya Faroqhi for this observation.

[59] Halil İnalcik, ed., *Hicri 835 Tarihli Suret-i Defter-i Sancak-i Arvanid* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1954).

[60] Başbakanlık Arşivi, Maliyeden Müdevver 231.

falls outside the scope of the present study, and could in fact form the subject of a separate monograph.

For the purposes of the present work, apart from the important Ottoman narrative and literary accounts to be discussed below, some documents (*nīşān*) are available in which the Ottoman princes of the civil war granted privileges to certain individuals, monasteries, and other religious foundations (*waqf*, *vaḳf*). Most of these documents have been published by Paul Wittek in a series of articles entitled "Zu einigen frühosmanischen Urkunden."[61] As with coins (see below) the main use of such documents is often to demonstrate a prince's control of a particular region at a particular time. Thanks to the existence of chancery manuals (*münşe'āt*) compiled from real documents, the occasional letter has also come down to us. By far the most important of these for the period in question is a letter of oath sent by Mehmed Çelebi to the ruler of Germiyan Yakub II in spring of 1403; another case is Mehmed's correspondence in 1416 with Timur's successor Shahrukh.[62]

Many coins have survived from the civil war, issued by all of the claimants to the Ottoman throne except İsa, whose reign was very brief. These coins have been listed by İnalcık in his article on Mehmed I and are the subject of a monograph by Cüneyt Ölçer.[63] They prove first of all that the Ottoman economy still continued to function during the civil war despite the endemic warfare. Of equal importance, however, was the function of such coins in asserting the political claims of the prince who issued them. In Islamic tradition, political power in a region was asserted by minting coins and having the Friday sermon delivered in the ruler's name (*ḫuṭbe ve sikke*). As we will see, it is significant that one of the coins minted by Mehmed Çelebi in Bursa also

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[61] Paul Wittek, "Zu einigen frühosmanischen Urkunden," I. WZKM 53 (1957): 300–313; II. WZKM 54 (1958): 240–256; III. WZKM 55 (1959): 122–141; IV. WZKM 56 (1960): 267–284; V. WZKM 57 (1961): 102–117; VI. WZKM 58 (1962): 165–197; VII. 59–60 (1963–1964): 201–223.

[62] Mehmed Çelebi's letter of oath was discovered and published by Şinasi Tekin in "Fatih Sultan Mehmed Devrine Âit bir İnşâ Mecmuası," JTS 20 (1996): 267–311; for an English translation of this document, see Dimitris Kastritsis, "Çelebi Meḥemmed's Letter of Oath (*Sevgendnāme*) to Ya'ḳūb II of Germiyan: Notes and a Translation Based on Şinasi Tekin's Edition," *Şinasi Tekin'in Anısına: Uygurlardan Osmanlıya* (Istanbul: Simurg, 2005). Mehmed's correspondence with Shahrukh is in Feridun's *Münşe'ātü 's-Selāṭīn* (Istanbul, 1264–1265/1848–1849), vol. 1, 150–151.

[63] İnalcık, "Meḥemmed I," 974 (chart); Cüneyt Ölçer, *Yıldırım Bayezid'in Oğullarına Ait Akçe ve Mangırlar* (Istanbul: Yenilik Basımevi, 1968). A recent article on Ottoman coins in this period is Elizabeth Zachariadou, "The 'Old *Akçe*' in the First Half of the XVth Century" (forthcoming in Klaus-Peter Matschke festschrift).

bore the name of his overlord Timur. Finally, as already mentioned, the fact that many coins indicate the date and place at which they were issued means that they can be used to prove that an Ottoman prince had control of a particular city at a particular time. This is also true of some inscriptions, such as the one placed on the tomb (*türbe*) of Yıldırım Bayezid in Bursa by Emir Süleyman, and the burial inscription of Çandarlı Ali Paşa in Ankara, which indicates that he died there on 28 December 1406.[64]

Short Chronicles and Travel Accounts

Short chronicles and travel accounts occupy the space between the documentary, numismatic, and epigraphic sources discussed above and the larger chronicles and literary accounts to be discussed below. In fact, the distinction is mostly a formal one, since short chronicles are brief entries recording events, and as such do not differ much from reports sent by Venetian and Ragusan merchants and functionaries to their home governments. The same is true of travel literature, whose sole relevant example is the Castilian ambassador Ruy Gonzalez de Clavijo's account of his embassy to Timur in 1403–1406, in which he makes certain references to the situation in the Ottoman lands.[65]

The most important short chronicles for the study of the Ottoman civil wars are Byzantine. We are fortunate to have an almost complete edition of these chronicles by Peter Schreiner in two volumes, the second of which contains the editor's commentary.[66] This commentary must be used with caution especially with regard to dates, since Schreiner creates the impression that his dating of events derives from

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[64] Robert Mantran, "Les inscriptions Arabes de Brousse," *Bulletin d'Études Orientales* 14 (1952–1954): 18; Ekrem Hakkı Ayverdi, *Osmanlı Mi'mârîsinin İlk Devri: Ertuğrul, Osman, Orhan Gaziler, Hüdavendigar ve Yıldırım Bayezid, 630–805 (1230–1402)* (Istanbul: Baha Matbaası, 1966), 464–469; Franz Taeschner and Paul Wittek, "Die Vizirfamilie der Ğandarlızāde (14./15. Jhdt.) und ihre Denkmäler," *Der Islam* 18 (1929): 60–115; Franz Taeschner and Paul Wittek, "Die Vizirfamilie der Ğandarlızāde (14./15. Jhdt.) und ihre Denkmäler: Nachträge," *Der Islam* 22 (1935): 73–75.

[65] Ruy Gonzalez de Clavijo, ed. Francisco Lopez Estrada, *Embajada a Tamorlan. Estudio y edición de un manuscrito del siglo XV* (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Cientificas, 1943); English translation by Guy LeStrange, *Clavijo: Embassy to Tamerlane (1403–1406)* (New York: Harper, 1928).

[66] Peter Schreiner, *Die byzantinischen Kleinchroniken* (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1975). On the significance of these chronicles, see Herbert Hunger, *Die hochsprachliche profane Literatur der Byzantiner* (Munich: Beck, 1978), 481–482.

the short chronicles themselves, whereas this is in fact not always the case. Unfortunately, he was unable to include in his edition a certain extensive short chronicle with important information on the Ottoman civil war, which was published in a separate article by Elpidio Mioni shortly after the appearance of Schreiner's compilation.[67] Finally, the Serbian short chronicles published by Ljubomir Stojanović should also be mentioned, one of which is the only source to provide the date of the death of Musa Çelebi.[68]

Long Chronicles and Literary Sources: The Ahval

Let us now turn to the more extensive narrative accounts of the civil war, beginning with the Ottoman chronicles and other historical literature. As has been suggested, by far the most extensive and important of these accounts is the *Ahval*, a contemporary account of the exploits of Çelebi Mehmed I from the Battle of Ankara to his defeat of Musa (5 July 1413). Since this text is our most important Ottoman narrative account of the civil war, it is worth pausing here to examine it in detail.

As Halil İnalcık has pointed out, the source in question is in fact an epic in the style of a 'book of exploits' (*menāḳıb-nāme*) not unlike the well-known medieval Turkish epics of *Salṭuḳnāme*, *Dānişmendnāme*, *Baṭṭālnāme*, and *Düstūrnāme*.[69] To varying degrees, all of these epics contain traces

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[67] Elpidio Mioni, "Una inedita cronaca bizantina (dal Marc. gr. 595)," *Rivista di Studi Bizantini e Slavi* 1 (1981): 71–87.

[68] Ljubomir Stojanović, *Stari Srpski Rodoslovi i Letopisi* (Sremski Karlovci: U Srpskoj Manastirskoj Stampariji, 1927), 224, no. 622.

[69] İnalcık, "Meḥemmed I," 977; Ebū'l-ḫayr Rūmī, *The Legend of Sarı Saltuk, Collected from Oral Tradition by Ebu'l-Hayr Rumi*, ed. Fahir İz, Şinasi Tekin, and Gönül Alpay-Tekin, *Sources of Oriental Languages and Literatures* 4 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, Department of Near Eastern Languages and Literatures, 1974); Irène Mélikoff-Sayar, "Qui était Sarı Saltuk? Quelques remarques sur les manuscrits du Saltukname," in Colin Heywood and Colin Imber, eds., *Studies in Ottoman history in Honour of Professor V.L. Ménage* (Istanbul: Isis, 1994), 231–238; Irène Mélikoff-Sayar, *La geste de Melik Danismend: Étude critique du Danismendname* (Paris: Maisonneuve, 1960); Necati Demir, *Danişmend-name: Tenkidli Metin, Türkiye Türkçesine Aktarılış, Dil Özellikleri, Sözlük, Tıpkıbasım. Sources of Oriental Languages and Literatures* 54 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, Department of Near Eastern Languages and Literatures, 2002); Yorgos Dedes, *The Battalname, an Ottoman Turkish Frontier Epic Wondertale: Introduction, Turkish Transcription, English Translation and Commentary. Sources of Oriental Languages and Literatures* 34 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, Department of Near Eastern Languages and Literatures, 1996); Mükrimin Halil (Yınanç), ed., *Düstūrnāme-i Enverī* (Istanbul: Evḳāf Maṭbaʿası, 1929); Irène Mélikoff-Sayar, *Le destan d'Umur Pacha* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1954).

of real historical events, although it is sometimes difficult to separate fact from fiction. The popularity of such works in the fifteenth century suggests that they held an important place in the formation and preservation of historical consciousness at that time. In the words of Cemal Kafadar:

> The impressive historiographic output of the Ottomans in the fifteenth century must be seen in the larger context of transformations in the historical consciousness of Turco-Muslim Anatolians … All this must also be related, on the one hand, to the transition from oral to written culture in certain circles and, on the other, to a series of complex ideological experiments in response to unprecedented political problems starting with an identity and confidence crisis following the Timurid debacle.[70]

The style of the *Ahval* leaves no doubt that like other works of its kind, it was intended to be read aloud before an audience, which was most probably composed of different social groups. This is what gave the work its intended propaganda value. As İnalcık has pointed out, "in a society imbued with the *ghazā* spirit *menāqibnāmes* were usually intended to be read aloud in public gatherings, in the army or in the bazaars …"[71] That this also holds true for the *Ahval* is clear both from the work's lively narrative style, which often includes dialogue in simple everyday language, as well as the fact that a new chapter often begins with a brief summary of the previous one.

The *Ahval* has not survived in its original form, but only as incorporated in two later chronicles. One of these is the anonymous Ottoman chronicle known as "Oxford Anonymous" or "pseudo-Ruhi" (Bodleian Library MS Marsh 313). The other is the chronicle of Neşri, which survives in many manuscripts reflecting the different stages of its composition.[72] Both Oxford Anonymous (OA) and Neşri are available in published form. The single manuscript of OA has been published in facsimile with an imperfect transliteration (i.e. insufficient diacritics) under the erroneous title of "Rûhî Tarîhi."[73] As for Neşri, both a critical edi-

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[70] Cemal Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds*, 95.

[71] Halil İnalcık, "The Rise of Ottoman Historiography," in *Historians of the Middle East*, ed. Bernard Lewis and P.M. Holt (London: Oxford University Press, 1962), 157.

[72] See V.L. Ménage, *Neshrī's History of the Ottomans: the Sources and Development of the Text* (London and New York: Oxford University Press, 1964). Ménage's study is an indispensable guide to anyone approaching the complex compilation of Neşri, whether in manuscript or in published form.

[73] Yaşar Yücel and Halil Erdoğan Cengiz, "Rûhî Tarîhi—Oxford Nüshası," *Belgeler (Türk Tarih Kurumu)* 14 (1989–1992): 359–472 + facsimile (166 unnumbered pages). My citations of OA refer to these MS pages numbered by hand.

tion and facsimiles of two of the most important manuscripts are available.[74] While İnalcık has stated that the *Ahval* was "apparently most faithfully reproduced in [the] revised version" of Neşri's compilation, he provides no justification for his claim, and it would appear instead that Neşri made significant alterations both in style and content to his source in the process of incorporating it into his work.[75] These alterations are immediately visible if one compares the relevant passages of the two manuscripts of Neşri published by Franz Taeschner, the Codex Menzel (Mz) and the Codex Manisa (Mn).

The Codex Mz is an early draft of Neşri's chronicle written in the hand of a scholar who may have been Neşri himself, in which the process of compilation is clearly visible. The importance of Mz has been emphasized by the great philologist V.L. Ménage, who has stated that "it is an exceedingly good text, and that it stands in an intermediate position between the sources and the remaining manuscripts" of Neşri's chronicle.[76] The text of the segment of Mz covering the events of the civil war (namely the *Ahval*, which corresponds to folia 98–141) is almost identical word for word with the corresponding segment in OA (folia 45a–101b). However there are some minor discrepancies—certain passages are absent in OA, while Mz also seems to reflect some minor editing by Neşri.

Let us turn now to the question of the authenticity of the *Ahval* as a separate, contemporary account of the Ottoman civil war. The idea that the section on the civil war in Neşri and the Oxford Anonymous Chronicle represents a distinct text contemporary to the events that it describes is not new. It was stated simultaneously in 1962 by Ménage and İnalcık in two articles on early Ottoman historiography appearing in the same collection.[77] Along with Ménage's book on Neşri published a few years later, these two articles represent the culmination of the efforts of several prominent scholars to untangle the intricate web of the earliest Ottoman chronicles. Cemal Kafadar has compared the early Ottoman chronicles to a head of garlic, with many distinct cloves

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[74] F.R. Unat and M.A. Köymen, eds., *Kitâb-ı Cihan-nümâ: Neşrî tarihi*. 2 vols. (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1949–1957); Franz Taeschner, ed., *Ǧihānnümā: Die Altosmanische Chronik des Mevlānā Meḥemmed Neschrī. Band I: Einleitung und Text des Cod. Menzel*; *Band II: Text des Cod. Manisa 1373* (Leipzig: Harrassowitz, 1951–1959).

[75] İnalcık, "Meḥemmed I," 977.

[76] Ménage, *Neshrī's History*, 25.

[77] Halil Inalcik, "The Rise of Ottoman Historiography," 152–167; V.L. Ménage, "The Beginnings of Ottoman Historiography," in *Historians of the Middle East*, ed. Bernard Lewis and P.M. Holt (London: Oxford University Press, 1962), 168–179.

contained within subsequent layers.[78] It can thus be said that the *Ahval* has been viewed for half a century as one of the two oldest prose chronicles of Ottoman history (along with the *Menakıb* of Yahşi Fakih). However, it has not attracted the attention it deserves, and to date not a single scholar has attempted to prove its antiquity or describe its contents. It is therefore necessary to do so briefly here.

As Ménage has pointed out, a first indication is provided by the chapter headings in Codex Mz, which unlike other chapter headings in the same manuscript "are invariably in Turkish, each ending with the archaic construction *-duğıdur/-düğidür*."[79] In later, more polished versions of Neşri's work such as the Codex Mn, these chapter headings have been changed to conform to the rest of the chapter headings, which are in Arabic or Persian. Turning now to OA, we see that unlike Mz all chapter headings share the form "*duğıdur/-düğidür*" identified by Ménage. At first OA thus appears to be a continuous, stylistically consistent chronicle of the house of Osman from the beginning of the dynasty until Bayezid II's conquest of Kilia and Akkerman (1484). While this would suggest that the chapters on the civil war in OA were composed in the late fifteenth century along with the rest of the chronicle, and that Neşri then incorporated them selectively into his own work, this first impression is false for several reasons. Perhaps the most important of these is that the section on the events of 1402–1413 in OA makes up approximately one third of the entire chronicle, a surprising proportion for a chronicle covering almost two hundred years of Ottoman history. Even the remainder of Mehmed I's reign after the end of the civil war (1413–1421) seems to have been added later, as it is only summarized briefly in a single chapter.

Another argument is the titles used for the Ottoman rulers. A brief examination of the chapter headings before and after the section on the civil war reveals that they are generally referred to there either by the Persian title *Pādişāh-ı İslām* ('The King of Islam') or its Arabic equivalent *Sulṭānü 'l-Islām* ('The Sultan of Islam'), sometimes followed by their name. In the section on the succession wars, however, Mehmed Çelebi is invariably called simply *Sulṭān*, and his name is only mentioned in the first two chapter headings. This leads to the conclusion that the section on the civil war (the *Ahval*) was originally separate from the rest of OA, and the anonymous late-fifteenth century compiler of the chronicle as

[78] Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds*, 90–105.
[79] Ménage, *Neshrī's History*, 14.

we have it today used it as a core, adding chapters before and after to cover the entirety of Ottoman history to his day. The simple title *Sulṭān* used for Mehmed Çelebi would suggest that the section on the civil war was produced during that war, or in its immediate aftermath. As we will see in chapter 6, there is strong evidence that Mehmed regularly used the title of sultan during his struggles with his brothers in order to assert his political claims. However, in later Ottoman history the title lost much of its original force and appeared too plain to be used on its own, which explains the use of loftier titles such as *Pādişāh-ı İslām* in the rest of OA. Some other examples are the following: *Sulṭān Murād Ḫān-ı Ġāzī* (Murad I); *Sulṭānü 'l-İslām ve 'l-Müslimīn Meḥemmed Ḫān* (Mehmed II); and *Sulṭān Murād Ḫān* (Murad II). Murad II seems in fact to occupy an intermediate position in this respect, as he is usually called simply *Sulṭān Murād*; this would suggest that the chapters on his reign may also come from an older, independent source. The fact that Mehmed Çelebi is only mentioned by name in the first two chapter headings of the *Ahval* suggests that the chronicle's author(s) didn't consider it necessary to mention his name, because the work was about him and him alone, and he was still alive at the time of its composition. Put differently, the chronicle's audience understood (or needed to understand!) that there was only one Ottoman Sultan, Mehmed Çelebi.

Finally, as will become clear in the course of the present study, another strong argument that the *Ahval* is a contemporary chronicle of the Ottoman civil war is its extremely detailed description of that war's events. Both the topographical and chronological data it provides is remarkably accurate, and it is extremely unlikely that such information would have been included in a chronicle composed several decades later. Furthermore, as we will see in chapter 6, the political preoccupations inherent in the narrative itself clearly reflect the situation following the Ottoman defeat of 1402.

Before moving on to other sources, a brief note on methodology is in order. To some readers, the use of the *Ahval* as a source of both historical information and political ideology may appear problematic. If the text in question was composed with a political agenda in mind, one might ask, does its bias not make it unsuitable as a source of historical information on "what happened"? In fact, we have already seen that this represents a false dilemma, since every source is biased in one way or another, and it is always possible to read the same text on several different levels depending on what one is looking for. In the first five chapters, the *Ahval* is used alongside other narrative and docu-

mentary sources in an effort to determine a plausible course of events. The emphasis there is on the chronicle as a source of information, that is, *what* is presented rather than *how* it is presented. Where the manner of presentation is discussed, it is done primarily to get at the real events behind the political message, rather in the manner of a detective investigating a crime. Since every crime requires a motive, it is generally possible to take at face value information whose falsification would serve no apparent purpose, such as names of people and places which appear plausible and are corroborated by other sources. However, in chapter 6 this approach is abandoned in favor of a direct treatment of the *Ahval*'s political agenda as revealed in the narrative itself, whose aim is to glean important information about Ottoman political attitudes at the time of its composition. The difference is not one of substance, but rather one of emphasis.

Other Ottoman Chronicles and Literary Sources

Apart from the *Ahval*, the Ottoman civil war and its aftermath saw the production of several other texts dealing with a historical theme. Some of them resemble the *Ahval* in that they do not survive as independent works, but only as parts of later chronicles. These include the so-called *Menāḳıb* of Yahşi Fakih, a work generally considered as accounting for the chapters on the fourteenth century common to Aşıkpaşazade and the *Ottoman Anonymous Chronicles* (ed. Giese), as well as some other passages in those chronicles which deal directly with the events of the civil war.[80] Like the *Ahval*, these texts are in a simple prose style with an oral flavor. Apart from these chronicles, the literary production of the civil war also features works of poetry with a historical content. Unlike the prose chronicles, these have survived in their original form thanks to the fact that they formed part of larger works by well-known poets of the day. The most famous is Ahmedi's *İskendernāme*, which is generally viewed as the oldest surviving work of Ottoman historiography and was dedicated to Emir Süleyman (1402–1411). Another which was discovered quite recently is a versified epic account of Mehmed Çelebi's victory over his brother Musa at the Battle of Çamurlu (1413) by the poet

[80] Friedrich Giese, ed. *Die altosmanische Chronik des Āšıḳpašazāde* (Leipzig: Harrassowitz, 1929); Friedrich Giese, ed. and tr., *Die altosmanischen anonymen Chroniken: Tawārīḫ-i Āl-i ʿUs̱mān*, Part 1: Text and Variants; Part 2: Translation (Published by the author, Breslau, 1922).

Abdülvasi Çelebi. Like the section on Ottoman history in Ahmedi's *İskendernāme*, Abdülvasi's epic poem also forms part of a larger work by him, a romance on the life of the prophet Abraham entitled *Ḫalīlnāme*. Abdülvasi Çelebi appears to have spent several years in Mehmed's court in Amasya; the *Ḫalīlnāme* was commissioned by Mehmed's grand vizier Bayezid Paşa and presented to the Sultan in 1414, only one year after the battle that it describes.[81]

The content of the *Ḫalīlnāme*'s epic account of the Battle of Çamurlu is of considerable historical interest, as it confirms certain ideas about dynastic succession also present in the *Ahval* (see chapter 6). Since this source has never before been translated or analyzed, an English translation of the relevant verses has also been provided in the appendix. There is therefore no reason to dwell any more on the *Ḫalīlnāme* here; let us turn instead to the *İskendernāme*. This work will not preoccupy us beyond this introduction, since Ahmedi provides little information that is directly relevant to a reconstruction of the events of the civil war, but deserves to be discussed briefly here since it forms part and parcel of the literary production of the period. Since 1992, a critical edition and translation by Kemal Sılay has become available; furthermore the content of Ahmedi's account has attracted a great deal of scholarly attention over the years, beginning with Paul Wittek and ending with Heath Lowry's recent book, in which the author devotes an entire chapter to criticizing Wittek's use of Ahmedi.[82]

The first observation that must be made about Ahmedi's work is that despite the certainty that it was completed sometime between 1402 and 1411 and intended for Emir Süleyman, who died before the work could be presented to him, there is still some controversy concerning the time of composition of its various parts. It is not clear when the poet entered the service of the Ottomans; it has been alleged that prior to joining the Ottoman court Ahmedi had spent time in the court of Germiyan, where he may have begun composition of the *İskendernāme*.[83] Needless to

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[81] Abdülvasi Çelebi, *Hâlilname* (sic), ed. Ayhan Güldaş (Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı, 1996). For information on the author and his work, see the editor's introduction, pages 7–10, 12–13, 19–21. The chapter on Mehmed's battle with Musa was published previously by the same editor as "Fetret Devri'ndeki Şehzadeler Mücadelesini Anlatan İlk Manzum Vesika," *Türk Dünyası Araştırmaları* 72 (June 1991): 99–110. A translation of this chapter is contained in the appendix of the present work.

[82] Kemal Sılay, "Aḥmedī's History of the Ottoman Dynasty," JTS 16 (1992): 129–200; Lowry, *The Nature of the Early Ottoman State*, 15–31 (chapter 2).

[83] Sılay, "Aḥmedī's History," 129.

say, the question that most concerns us here is the dating and content of the section on Ottoman history. This section in fact forms part of a larger world history, which itself forms part of the epic of Alexander, the main subject of Ahmedi's work. Moreover, it is clear that for his history of the Ottoman dynasty Ahmedi made use of a lost prose chronicle that was also used more extensively by later chroniclers.[84]

As has already been stated, despite the fact that Emir Süleyman was his patron, Ahmedi provides little historical information on his reign. A first reading of the *İskendernāme*'s chapter on Süleyman appears to reveal a rather standard presentation of ideal Perso-Islamic kingship, emphasizing the ruler's power, justice, and generosity. In the context of the civil war, however, these verses deserve a closer reading, especially the following couplets:

> Although [Emir Süleyman has] an army, wealth, treasure, and power, he does not desire to conquer a country
> Compared to his grace, the world is only as big as a mosquito's wing
> If he had desired to conquer a country without having a battle, the east and west would have been taken by him[85]

These verses are not without political significance in the context of the situation facing Yıldırım Bayezid's sons after the Ottoman defeat at Ankara. As has already been mentioned and will be discussed in detail below, following that defeat Emir Süleyman pursued a policy of appeasement toward the Christian powers of Rumeli, for which he was criticized by those elements of his own society whose existence depended on wars and raids against neighboring Christian states. As for Süleyman's policy towards Anatolia, while we will see in chapter 3 that he did attack some of the beyliks restored there by Timur, true expansion such as that which had taken place under Yıldırım Bayezid was impossible during the civil war. For these reasons Emir Süleyman, who was indeed a wealthy and powerful prince as Ahmedi states, was unable to expand his territory. In this light, it would appear that in the above verses Ahmedi is trying to justify his patron's peaceful policies toward his neighbors by presenting them as a product of free choice rather than political necessity.

But what is most noteworthy about Ahmedi's treatment on Ottoman history is his emphasis on *gaza* as the practice that made the first

[84] İnalcık, "The Rise of Ottoman Historiography," 161.
[85] Sılay, "Aḥmedī's History," 144, verses 305–307.

Ottoman sultans so successful. While Wittek originally used Ahmedi's emphasis on *gaza* as proof that the first Ottoman sultans were *gazi*s, Pál Fodor and more recently Heath Lowry have argued that these ideas "were a literary device, whereby 'Ahmedi presents the Ottoman rulers as *gazis* in a manner that served well-definable political objectives.'"[86] Leaving aside the loaded question of whether Osman and Orhan really saw themselves as *gazi*s, it is still noteworthy that this quality of the earlier sultans would be emphasized in a work completed during the civil war, since the direct cause of the Timurid disaster was widely perceived as being Bayezid's betrayal of the *gaza* spirit, represented by his attacks on the Ottomans' Muslim neighbors. Following Fodor, Lowry has also argued that "a careful reading of the full text [of the section on the Ottomans in the *İskendernāme*] establishes that Aḥmedī had initially envisaged the work for Bayezid, as an attempt to warn him away from the errors (his wars against his fellow Muslim rulers in Anatolia) which were ultimately (while the work was still in progress) to lead to his downfall." But it is much more likely that the relevant section was composed *after* 1402, for an Emir Süleyman who desparately needed to show his reverence for his ancestors' struggles against the Christians, since he was not undertaking any such struggles himself. Lowry's assertion that it was begun under Bayezid does not hold water, as it is based only on the unfounded assertion of Fodor, and a statement by Ménage which Lowry has misinterpreted.[87] Thus Ahmedi's warning about the dangers of turning away from *gaza*, an activity respected by the "Tatars" during the reign of the Seljuk Sultan Alaeddin, is not "prophetic" as Lowry claims but rather didactic, for it was written after 1402! Moreover, it is extremely unlikely that Ahmedi would have dared to lecture "his intended patron Sultan Bayezid … without much subtlety" since by all accounts Yıldırım Bayezid was not a man who took kindly to criticism.[88] In light of the above, Lowry's presentation of Ahmedi's account of Ottoman history cannot be accepted as

[86] Lowry, *The Nature of the Early Ottoman State*, 11. Lowry is quoting Pál Fodor, "Aḥmedī's Dasitan as a Source of Early Ottoman History," *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 38 (1984): 41–54.

[87] Lowry, *The Nature of the Early Ottoman State*, 17, 162 n. 10. Contrary to Lowry's allegations, Ménage ("The Beginnings of Ottoman historiography," 170) states that "the chapter on Ottoman history as we have it must have been introduced when Aḥmedī came under Emīr Süleymān's patronage … it is not easy to decide at what point [the bald prose chronicle that was Aḥmedī's] source ended: it was probably about the middle of the reign of Bayezid I…"

[88] Lowry, *The Nature of the Early Ottoman State*, 23.

such. Nevertheless, there is at least one positive aspect of Lowry's chapter on Ahmedi: by emphasizing the *İskendernāme*'s criticism of Yıldırım Bayezid's policies, he unintentionally sheds light on the political circumstances of the civil war and the challenges facing Ahmedi's real patron, Emir Süleyman.

Non-Ottoman Chronicles and Literary Sources

Apart from the Ottoman chronicles and other works discussed above, the essential sources on the Ottoman civil war also include several non-Ottoman chronicles and literary sources. Since the present work is first and foremost about the Ottomans themselves, these sources will not be discussed in the same detail. Nevertheless, it is worth pausing for a moment to examine what makes the sources in question so indispensable to our topic.

Several non-Ottoman historical accounts are particularly rich on the events of the civil war in regions in which the Ottoman princes were active during this time. The first of these is the Byzantine chronicle of Doukas, which is most important as a source on events in Aydın, a region with which its author was well acquainted.[89] As a prominent partisan of the defeated emperor John VI Kantakouzenos, in 1345 Doukas' grandfather Michael had been forced to escape from Constantinople to Ayasoluk (Ephesus), whose ruler Aydınoğlı İsa had given him refuge. Since then, the family had maintained a certain loyalty to the Aydın dynasty which is evident in Doukas' chronicle. By 1421, Doukas had joined the service of the Genoese family of Adorno in New Phokaia (Yeni Foça) where he worked as secretary. Then he moved to Lesbos where he died in the service of the Gattilusi, whose interests he represented in their various negotiations with the Ottoman porte. All of this recommends his chronicle as a source of primary importance for the history of the Aegean coast of Asia Minor in the first half of the fifteenth century, especially where the region of Aydın and

[89] Vasile Grecu, ed. *Istoria Turco-Bizantină (1341–1462)* (Bucharest: Editura Academiei Republicii Populaire Romîne, 1958); English translation by Harry J. Magoulias, *Decline and Fall of Byzantium to the Ottoman Turks* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1975). When citing the chronicle of Doukas, I have opted for providing chapter and paragraph numbers rather than page numbers of individual editions. This has been done in order to facilitate the reader's use of different editions of the original text as well as Magoulias' English translation. My quotations from Doukas are based on Magoulias' translation, which I have modified when necessary to be more faithful to the original.

its local dynasty are concerned. Among the events of the civil war for which Doukas is an indispensable source are Mehmed Çelebi's alleged attempt to save his father from captivity after the Battle of Ankara; Emir Süleyman's relationship with his vassal Cüneyd of Aydın; and the revolt of Şeyh Bedreddin's associate Börklüce Mustafa in the Aydın region in 1416.

Two other Byzantine historical narratives that are essential for reconstructing the events of the civil war are the chronicle of Laonikos Chalkokondyles and the discourse on the miracles of St. Demetrius by the Archbishop of Thessaloniki Symeon.[90] There is no need to dwell here on Chalkokondyles, whose extensive chronicle of the fall of Byzantium and the rise of the Ottomans in the style of Herodotus has been discussed by such prominent scholars of Byzantine literature as Herbert Hunger.[91] Chalkokondyles' sources are unknown, but his chronicle contains a wealth of information on early Ottoman history, including the names of many historical actors about whom we otherwise know very little. An alphabetical list of the Ottoman personages appearing in Chalkokondyles, in which his information is compared to that in the Ottoman chronicles, is available in the form of a published dissertation by Akdes Nimet Kurat.[92]

As for Symeon of Thessaloniki, his discourse on the miracles of St. Demetrius in preserving Thessaloniki from various calamities is a source of the first order on the period 1387–1427. Symeon assumed his position as Archbishop of Thessaloniki in 1416 or 1417, and probably wrote the work in question in 1427 or 1428. He was thus an eyewitness to events in Thessaloniki between 1416/1417 and 1427. He is also a first-hand source for the years preceding his induction as archbishop, including the period that concerns us here—during that period he was probably based in his native city of Constantinople, where it is believed that he resided prior to assuming his position in Thessaloniki.[93] Despite the fact that Symeon's account of Ottoman activity is strongly

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[90] Jeno Darkó, ed., *Laonoci Chalcocandylae historiarum demonstrationes* (Budapest: Academia Litterarum Hungarica, 1922–1927); David Balfour, *Politico-historical Works of Symeon, Archbishop of Thessalonica (1416/17 to 1429): Critical Greek Text with Introduction and Commentary* (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1979).

[91] Hunger, *Die hochsprachliche profane Literatur der Byzantiner*, 485–490 (Munich: Beck, 1978).

[92] Akdes Nimet (Kurat), *Die türkische Prosopographie bei Laonikos Chalkokandyles* (Hamburg: Neimann & Moschinski, 1933).

[93] Balfour, *Symeon*, esp. 119, 132.

influenced by his anti-Turkish sentiments, his discourse is an essential source on a number of events, especially those concerning Thessaloniki, such as Emir Süleyman's return of the city to Byzantium following the Treaty of 1403, its siege by Musa Çelebi, and the Mustafa affair of 1416. A detailed examination of the situation in Thessaloniki is available in the form of a doctoral dissertation by Nevra Necipoğlu.[94] Symeon's account is also directly relevant to some of the larger questions that will occupy us here, most notably the rise and reign of Musa.

Another source that is of primary importance for the study of the career of Musa as well as other aspects of the civil war is the biographical chronicle of Stefan Lazarević in old Serbian by Konstantin the Philosopher (Konstantin Kostenečki).[95] Like Symeon of Thessaloniki, Konstantin the Philosopher was an eyewitness to many of the events that he described. He spent the years of the Ottoman civil war in Bulgaria and Serbia, joining the court of Stefan Lazarević after the sack of Plovdiv by Musa Çelebi's forces in 1410, which he describes in detail. On the value of Konstantin as a historical source, an old but still useful article is available by Stanoje Stanojević.[96] The relevant portions of Konstantin the Philosopher's work have been edited and translated into German by Maximilian Braun, whose translation forms the basis for the discussion and quotations here.[97]

Finally, two other non-Ottoman literary sources deserve to be mentioned even though they do not directly concern the Ottoman civil war. Much like the short chronicles and documentary sources discussed earlier, these works contain information not otherwise available that sheds light on the period in question. One is the anonymous Greek chronicle of the Tocco family published by Schirò.[98] This source deals mainly with the exploits of its protagonist, the Angevin lord Carlo Tocco who was based in Cephalonia, against his Albanian enemies in Epirus, Zenebis and Spata. As we will see, this source interests us

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[94] Nevra Necipoğlu, *Byzantium Between the Ottomans and the Latins: A Study of Political Attitudes in the Late Palaiologan Period, 1370–1460* (Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University, 1990).

[95] "Konstantin Kostenečki," ODB.

[96] Stanoje Stanojević, "Die Biographie Stefan Lazarević's von Konstantin dem Philosophen als Geschichtsquelle," *Archiv für Slavische Philologie* 18 (1896): 409–472.

[97] Maximilian Braun, ed. and tr., *Lebensbeschreibung des Despoten Stefan Lazarević von Konstantin dem Philosophen* (The Hague: Mouton, 1956).

[98] Giuseppe Schirò, *Cronaca dei Tocco di Cefalonia* (Rome, 1975); see also Elizabeth Zachariadou, "Οἱ χίλιοι στίχοι στὴν ἀρχὴ τοῦ Χρονικοῦ τῶν Τόκκο" [The First Thousand Verses of the Chronicle of the Tocco], *Epeirotika Chronika* 25 (1983): 158–181.

mainly because it mentions a marriage alliance between Carlo Tocco and Musa. The other is the Timurid chronicle of Sharaf al-Din Yazdi, which provides essential information on Timur's policy toward Yıldırım Bayezid's sons.[99] Although the chronicle in question is only one of many Persian chronicles of Timur, it has been chosen for its comprehensiveness. Like the Ottoman chronicle of Neşri, Yazdi's chronicle is a compilation probably completed in 1424–1425, based largely on the chronicle of Shami which was completed during Timur's lifetime.[100]

[99] Sharaf al-Dīn ʿAlī Yazdī, *Ẓafar-nāmah*, ed. Muhammad ʿAbbāsī (Tehran: Amīr Kabīr, 1336/1957–1958); Nizām al-Dīn Shāmī, *Ẓafernâme*, ed. Necati Lugal (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1949).

[100] See John E. Woods, "The Rise of Timurid Historiography," JNES 46/2 (1987): 81–108.

CHAPTER ONE

THE POLITICAL LANDSCAPE AFTER ANKARA (28 JULY 1402 – SPRING 1403)

Before describing the succession wars between the sons of Bayezid, it is important to understand the overall situation in which the Ottoman princes found themselves after the disaster at Ankara. In the words of a contemporary Ottoman chronicle, after the Battle of Ankara "everyone longed for their own people and were scattered."[1] Three of Bayezid's sons were able to escape from the battlefield and establish rule over a province in the early stages of the civil war: Süleyman, İsa and Mehmed. Two others were captured by Timur: Musa and Mustafa. Of these, Mustafa was taken hostage to Samarkand, where he remained until he was released by Timur's son Shahrukh in 1415. Musa was released in spring of 1403, whereupon he entered the custody of his brother Mehmed, since he was a minor. As we will see, Mehmed too eventually released his brother, who made his own bid for power in Rumeli at the end of the civil war.

Apart from these major players, there were several other sons of Bayezid who did not play an active role in the civil war. One was Yusuf, who ended up in Constantinople, converted to Christianity, taking the name Demetrios, and died of natural causes. Another was the young prince Kasım, whom Süleyman kept in his court and eventually handed over along with his sister Fatma to the Byzantine Emperor Manuel II as hostages.[2]

Of the three princes who took control of a province in 1402, Emir Süleyman was the one in the most advantageous position, at least initially. Süleyman was able to cross to Rumeli, the only part of Bayezid's empire to have escaped entirely the depredations of Timur's army. He was accompanied there by many soldiers and officials of Bayezid's empire, for whom crossing the straits was the best way to escape from

[1] The *Ahval*: OA, 45a; Mz, 98.

[2] For a complete list of the sources and literature on Bayezid's sons, see Zachariadou, "Süleyman Çelebi," 269–270.

the chaos in Anatolia. Thus, at the beginning of the Ottoman succession struggle, Süleyman had on his side the bulk of his father's army and administrative apparatus. According to an Ottoman chronicle tradition, Süleyman was rescued from the battlefield and taken to Rumeli by several of Bayezid's highest ranking officials. These included Bayezid's grand vizier Çandarlı Ali Paşa; Eyne Beg Subaşı, an important magnate who later joined Mehmed and was killed at Ulubad fighting against İsa; and Hasan Ağa, the commander of the janissaries.[3] As we will see, the Janissary Corps, which had been enlarged by Bayezid to a sizeable standing army, seems to have been based in Rumeli during the civil war, where it fought first on the side of Emir Süleyman and then on that of Musa.

The fact that Bayezid's magnates fleeing from the Battle of Ankara chose to take Süleyman with them to Rumeli suggests that Süleyman was probably viewed as the favorite candidate for the succession. As we will see in a moment, İsa also took the route to Rumeli, and was probably with Süleyman and his retinue all along. But by the time they reached Rumeli, it was clear to all that Süleyman was the most powerful of the two brothers. According to Doukas and other sources, Emir Süleyman was almost certainly the oldest of Bayezid I's surviving sons.[4] Moreover, as we will see in chapter 6, Süleyman's seniority over his brothers and adversaries Mehmed and Musa became a constant preoccupation for contemporary Ottoman narratives, which make use of elaborate techniques to justify the eventual victory of Mehmed Çelebi.[5] Along these lines, it should also be noted that the same Ottoman chronicle tradition that describes Emir Süleyman's crossing to Rumeli in the

[3] Aşıkpaşazade, 72; *Ottoman Anonymous Chronicles*, 47. This passage is common to Aşıkpaşazade and the *Ottoman Anonymous Chronicles*. According to the *Ahval*, Eyne Beg was the governor of Balıkesir, and was perhaps related to Yakub II of Germiyan (see below). See also Akdes Nimet Kurat, *Die türkische Prosopographie bei Laonikos Chalkokandyles*, 41–42.

[4] In her article on Süleyman Çelebi, Elizabeth Zachariadou has argued that "according to both Ottoman and Byzantine tradition, Isa was the elder son of Bayezid." In fact this claim is only made by the Byzantine chronicler Chalkokondyles. Zachariadou has misinterpreted Neşri (i.e. the *Ahval*) whose account only presents İsa as older than Mehmed. All other sources, including the Arabic chronicle of Ibn Arabshah, make it clear that in 1402 Emir Süleyman was the oldest of Bayezid's surviving sons. See Zachariadou, "Süleyman Çelebi," 286; Chalkokondyles, 159; OA, 67a; Mz, 115; Aḥmad Ibn ʿArabshāh, *Tamerlane, or Timur the Great Amir*, tr. J.H. Sanders (London: Luzac, 1936), 186.

[5] This is true of two contemporary texts, the *Ahval* and the *Ḥalīlnāme*.

company of Yıldırım Bayezid's officials also adds that shortly after his arrival there, Mehmed sent his older brother gifts as a token of recognition.[6]

Emir Süleyman's primacy probably antedated the civil war. By 1402, Süleyman had already distinguished himself as an important military commander who had played an active role in his father's campaigns. At the Battle of Ankara, he had led an entire flank of the Ottoman army, while his brothers had held subordinate positions.[7] This is one plausible explanation for Süleyman's title *emīr* ('commander') which formed an integral part of his name. This title appears on his coins and as part of his *tuğra* on documents issued during the civil war, and was so much a part of Süleyman's name that he generally appears in contemporary Byzantine and Latin sources as *Musulman* (a contraction of *Mīr Sülmān*) or some variant thereof.[8] Of course, it is possible that Süleyman used this title for propaganda purposes—an argument can be made that the use of a military title such as *emīr* may have been a deliberate attempt to address widespread internal opposition caused by Süleyman's peaceful policies toward the Christians. But this is unlikely, since Süleyman is attested as *Musulman* in a Byzantine short chronicle as early as 20 August 1402.[9] It is more probable that the title *emīr* reflects Süleyman's military career during the reign of his father Bayezid, who may have encouraged him to use it in order to compete with Timur, who went by the same title.

According to the aforementioned short chronicle, when Süleyman crossed to Rumeli on 20 August 1402, he had with him his brother İsa.[10] The Serbian prince Stefan Lazarević, who had fought bravely

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[6] Aşıkpaşazade, 72–73; *Ottoman Anonymous Chronicles*, 47.

[7] For the arrangement of Bayezid's army at Ankara, see Sharaf al-Dīn ʿAlī Yazdī, *Ẓafar-nāmah*, 306. According to Yazdi, Süleyman was commander of the right flank of Bayezid's army, the left flank being under the command of Stefan Lazarević. See also Marie Mathilde Alexandrescu-Dersca, *La Campagne de Timur en Anatolie*, 73–75. Alexandrescu-Dersca gives a detailed description of Bayezid's army based on several chronicles, and follows the chronicler Saʿdeddin in placing Süleyman at the head of the left flank and Lazarević on the right.

[8] On Süleyman's *tuğra*, see Paul Wittek, "Notes sur la *ṭughra* ottomane (II)," *Byzantion* 20 (1950): 273. Rather surprisingly, Yazdi also follows Byzantine and Latin usage in calling Süleyman *Musulman*, a contraction of his name that is understandable for a non-Muslim, but difficult to account for in a Muslim author.

[9] This name appears in a Byzantine short chronicle: see Peter Schreiner, *Die Byzantinischen Kleinchroniken*, 1: 634, 2: 373–374.

[10] See previous note; see also Zachariadou, "Süleyman Çelebi," 270. The chronicle does not give the brother's full name, but only the first letter *E*. However it is obvious

on Bayezid's side at the Battle of Ankara, also left the battlefield and crossed to Rumeli around the same time.[11] Before crossing the straits, Süleyman passed with his entourage through Bursa, the Ottoman capital or "throne city" (*dār al-Salṭana*, *pā-yı taḫt*) in Anatolia, where Bayezid's palace and treasury were located and his ancestors were buried. Süleyman couldn't stay in Bursa for long; he was forced to flee with what he could take from the treasury by August 3, when Timur's army sacked the city.[12]

Timur's Policy toward the Ottoman Princes

After his victory at Ankara, Timur regarded those parts of Anatolia that had been seized by Bayezid from rival Muslim dynasties as belonging rightfully to those dynasties. Following that logic, Timur spent more than half a year touring Anatolia and reinstating members of the *beylik* dynasties as his vassals. There can be no doubt that Timur also had other motives for staying in Anatolia: for one, winter was approaching, and his army needed to rest and replenish their supplies through plunder. But Timur's long stay in Anatolia was also necessary to consolidate his victory at Ankara. With his blessings, the *beyliks* of Aydın, Menteşe, Karaman, Germiyan, Saruhan, and Canık (İsfendiyar) were reconstituted. Karaman was intentionally enlarged to counterbalance any future Ottoman ambitions in the area, while the parts of Bayezid's empire that were uncontested by other dynasties were left in Ottoman hands.

The reason behind Timur's dismemberment of Anatolia was simple: he had no intention of staying in Anatolia and knew that it would be impossible to rule directly. As Beatrice Forbes Manz has pointed out in her study of Timur, which represents the state of the art on that ruler's reign and policies, "the bloodshed which accompanied Temür's campaigns in the Middle East masks a policy of preserving local rule even in areas where his army encountered resistance… Temür often

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that this can only be interpreted as *'Εσάμπεϊς* or *'Εσές* i.e. İsa Beg. Furthermore, as we will see below, there is also evidence of cooperation between Süleyman and İsa around the time of the Battle of Ulubad.

[11] Doukas 16:6.

[12] See the account of Gerardo Sagredo in Alexandrescu-Dersca, *La Campagne*, 130. Sagredo himself fled Bursa on August 3.

kept local dynasties under control by repeatedly replacing their leaders with other members of the same family."[13] Given this policy, it is not surprising that Timur left the Ottoman dynasty intact in certain areas, while at the same time weakening it considerably by removing much of its territory and distributing what was left among several rival princes. As proof of their authority to rule in his name, those princes were given certificates of appointment (*yarlığ*).[14] After Timur's death, his son and successor Shahrukh would continue to claim his family's rights over the region that had once belonged to Bayezid, and would criticize Mehmed Çelebi for trying to change the *status quo* there by eliminating his brothers.[15]

Let us now examine which parts of Bayezid's empire remained in Ottoman hands after the Battle of Ankara. One was Rumeli (the Ottoman Balkans) on which Timur's armies had never set foot, and where Ottoman rule was uncontested by other Muslim dynasties. Another was the original Ottoman province of Bithynia with its capital Bursa. Finally there was Rum, the region around the cities of Amasya and Tokat, which had been governed prior to 1402 by Mehmed Çelebi. In fact, as we will see, it was not Timur's original intention to leave Rum in Ottoman hands.

It is worth taking a moment to examine the main characteristics of these three regions, since they were very different from one another and local circumstances played an important part in the succession struggles that ensued. Rumeli was a province that had been conquered for Islam for the first time from the "abode of war" (*dārü'l-ḥarb*, the part of the world outside Muslim rule). The conquest of Rumeli, in which various "lords of the marches" (*uc begleri*) had played a crucial role, had thus won the Ottomans a certain prestige in the larger Islamic world. That Timur was aware of that prestige is demonstrated by the fact that just a few months after Ankara, in the middle of the winter, he decided to invest his entire military machine in the sack of a single fortress, the impregnable castle of the Knights Hospitallers in İzmir (Smyrna). The choice of that fortress, whose successful sack is described in great detail by the Timurid chroniclers, was surely more than a coincidence.[16]

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[13] Manz, *The Rise and Rule of Tamerlane*, 91.

[14] See C.J. Heywood, "Yarlıgh," EI[2].

[15] See İnalcık, "Mehmed I," 976. See also the final chapter of the present work, where Shahrukh's letter to Mehmed Çelebi and Mehmed's reply are discussed in detail.

[16] Yazdi, *Ẓafar-nāmah*, vol. 2, 333–342. The following passage (335–336, my translation) sheds some light on Timur's motivation in besieging the castle of Smyrna and on

Doukas relates that after the end of the civil war Mehmed I found out that the Grand Master of Rhodes was trying to rebuild the fortress, and opposed the project, arguing that according to the local Muslims, its destruction was the only good deed Timur had done in Anatolia.[17]

As for Bithynia, like Rumeli it was a region that was not contested by rival Muslim dynasties. It had been the site of the first Ottoman conquests under the dynasty's founder Osman and his son Orhan, which were largely at the expense of local Christian rulers. Along with Rumeli, Bithynia was thus the Ottoman territory *par excellence*, and in 1402 its main city Bursa was still functioning as the main Ottoman capital (*pā-yı taḫt*). As will become clear in chapter 2, the possession of Bursa conferred significant political prestige during the Ottoman civil war, and the warring princes therefore fought over it viciously. Finally it must be remembered that the prince who controlled Bursa and Bithynia also controlled the neighboring region of Karasi on the Dardanelles, which had been absorbed by the Ottomans early on and for which there were no rival claimants.

Turning now to Rum, one might say that it differed significantly from both Rumeli and Bithynia in a number of respects. It was much farther east, and therefore closer to the Timurids' direct interests. Moreover, unlike Rumeli and Western Anatolia, Rum was comprised of a large nomadic hinterland surrounding the important trading towns of Amasya, Tokat and Sivas. Due to its demographic complexity and the fact that it represented a recent Ottoman conquest, Rum slipped outside Ottoman control after the Battle of Ankara. As a result, its former governor Mehmed Çelebi had to reassert himself in the area by capturing its towns and subduing its nomadic population, a process that will be described in detail below.

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the Ottoman's reputation as *gazis* in the larger Islamic world: "The people of [Smyrna] have planted the foot of insubordination in the corner of the land of Islam and are constantly confronting [the Muslims]. They are forced to seek assistance from the Franks to preserve [their fortress]; as a consequence, no Muslim until now has been able to dominate them, and they have never paid the *kharāj* or the *jizya* to any Sultan. Since they were always rebelling against the people of that land and oppressing them, Murad the father of Yıldırım Bayezid had repeatedly tightened the girdle of zeal, gathering an army and struggling against them to the best of his ability, but had failed to conquer the fortress and had returned home. Yıldırım Bayezid himself had besieged it for seven years and hadn't succeeded in taking it. The Muslims suffer greatly on account of that castle, and there is always death in their midst, and the rivers of their blood flow into the sea…"

[17] Doukas 21:4–5.

Wishing, then, to recognize the Ottomans' accomplishments in Europe on the other side of the straits (*asra yaka*) that he was unwilling or unable to cross, Timur decided to grant a diploma of appointment to Bayezid's son Emir Süleyman for that province. We learn this fact from Yazdi, who considered it worth noting that apart from the usual *yarlıġ*, Timur gave the new ruler of *asra yaka* a robe of honor (*ḫil'at*), headgear (*kulāh*), and a belt (*kamar*) as symbols of his rule over that prestigious province. But Timur did not recognize Süleyman's authority over Bithynia, the other major part of Bayezid's empire that was left in Ottoman hands. For that province, Yazdi informs us that a diploma of appointment was granted instead to Süleyman's brother İsa Beg.[18]

We have seen that after the Battle of Ankara, İsa had arrived in Rumeli along with Emir Süleyman. But by November of 1402, it is quite possible that he had already taken up residence in the plundered city of Bursa. At that time, İsa signed a deed (*nişān*) granting tax-exemption for a tract of land near Üsküdar across from Constantinople. This document, which has been studied by Paul Wittek, is dated from the middle third of the month of Rabi' II 805 (8–17 November 1402), suggesting that İsa was already behaving as the Ottoman ruler of Bithynia at the time. However, as no place of issue is mentioned, it is impossible to know for sure whether İsa had yet succeeded in establishing himself in Bursa. In any case, the document makes it clear that by that time, İsa was already claiming Bithynia as his own.[19]

It was not Timur's original intention to confirm İsa as his vassal in Bursa. According to a contemporary observer, after Timur's army destroyed the city on 3 August, Timur gave it to "a nephew of Bayezid, who was the son of his blind brother."[20] The words "blind brother"

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[18] Yazdi, *Ẓafar-nāmah*, 2:342.

[19] The *nişān* of İsa, in which he grants tax-exemption to the owner of a *çiftlik* in Çamlıca near Üsküdar, is in Feridun, *Münşe'ātü 's-Selāṭīn*. It has been analyzed extensively by Paul Wittek, "Zu einigen frühosmanischen Urkunden (III)," 129–135. Wittek also discusses another document dealing with the same *çiftlik*, whose date (1405) and *tuğra* as copied out into the chancery manual (*Yıldırım Bāyezīd Ḫan muẓaffer*) do not agree. Wittek argues that the *tuğra* may actually have been that of Bayezid's son Mustafa (*Emīr Muṣṭafā bin Bāyezīd Ḫan*), but his argument is not entirely convincing. The fact is that Mustafa's whereabouts before 1415 were unknown, he appears in no other source until then, and it is almost certain that he was a prisoner of the Timurids in Samarkand.

[20] Alexandrescu-Dersca, *La campagne*, 130. The contemporary observer is Gerardo Sagredo, the full text of whose account Alexandrescu-Dersca has published as an appendix to her work.

unmistakably refer to Murad I's rebellious son Savcı, who in 1373 had joined the Byzantine prince Andronikos in a failed coup against their fathers, and been punished by blinding.[21] Disenfranchised along with his father as a result of that incident, Savcı's son had good reason to resent Murad's son and successor Bayezid I, and had therefore joined Bayezid's other Anatolian enemies in Timur's court. It would seem, then, that Savcı's son briefly took control of Bursa, only to be ousted later by his cousin İsa. Sometime between 20 August 1402 when İsa arrived with Süleyman in Gallipoli, and November of the same year when he issued the aforementioned document as the ruler of Bithynia, İsa was somehow able to replace Savcı's son in Bursa.[22]

After this early mention, the son of Savcı does not appear again with certainty in the historical record until ten years later, as a rival of Musa Çelebi in Rumeli. But as we will see below, a man by the same name was based in Ankara in spring of 1403, who in the name of Timur attacked Mehmed Çelebi when he tried to pass through the region. Most probably this was the same man. As for Bursa, Timur recognized the power change there by granting İsa a *yarlġ* for the city at the same time as he granted Süleyman one for Rumeli. If we are to judge from the narration of Yazdi, this event took place in December 1402 or January 1403.[23]

Let us turn now to the situation in Rum. It is noteworthy that Yazdi does not mention Timur's granting a *yarlġ* to Mehmed Çelebi for this region. As we will see below, Mehmed's case was complicated by the fact that in order to gain control of Rum, first he had to defeat a rival non-Ottoman appointee. Moreover, as has already been stated, the population of Rum was largely nomadic, and in order to control the area it was first necessary for Mehmed to subjugate its tribal elements through a series of military campaigns. Thanks to the contemporary *Ahval*, it is possible to reconstruct in some detail the process through which Mehmed gained control of Rum. This will be done at the end of the present chapter.

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[21] See ODB, "Savcı Beg."

[22] It is interesting to speculate on the manner by which İsa was able to gain control of Bursa. As we will see in a moment, shortly after İsa took over in Bursa, his brother Mehmed took control of Amasya by defeating a rival appointee of Timur in battle. The population of Amasya played an essential role in Mehmed's victory. Perhaps something similar happened in Bursa, whose population seems to have taken similar initiative in the battles between Mehmed and İsa (see chapter 2).

[23] Yazdi, 342.

While there is no mention of a *yarlığ* to Mehmed Çelebi, the *Ahval* does discuss an exchange of embassies between Mehmed and Timur, which for several reasons took place later than those of his brothers (see below). It is impossible to know whether Timur recognized Mehmed's rule over Rum prior to his departure from Anatolia. What is clear, however, is that like his brothers, Mehmed behaved as Timur's vassal. Alone of all the Ottoman princes of the civil war, Mehmed minted a coin on which Timur's name appears alongside his own as his overlord.[24] We will see in the next chapter that this was probably an attempt on Mehmed's part to justify to Timur his conquest of Bursa after the Battle of Ulubad. In any case, by the time Mehmed had established himself in Rum, Timur had already begun preparations for his return to Central Asia, and took no further steps to interfere with the *status quo* in Anatolia.

At this point it should be mentioned that apart from Rum, which remained loyal to its governor Mehmed Çelebi, there is one other important area in which an appointee of Timur failed to take control, but was ousted by someone else claiming to represent the old order. That is Aydın, which was seized by "İzmir-oğlı" Cüneyd. The exploits of Cüneyd are described in detail in the chronicle of Doukas, which is our richest narrative source on the Aegean coastline of Anatolia during the civil war, and have been studied by Elizabeth Zachariadou.[25] Cüneyd's father Kara Subaşı was the Ottoman governor of the fortress of İzmir (Smyrna) under Yıldırım Bayezid, and may also have been a

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[24] For Mehmed's silver coin with Timur's name, see Cüneyt Ölçer, *Yıldırım Bayezid'in Oğullarına Ait Akçe ve Mangırlar*; İnalcık, "Meḥemmed I," 974 (chart); İbrahim and Cevriye Artuk, *İstanbul Arkeoloji Müzeleri Teshirdeki İslami Sikkeler Katalogu* (Istanbul: Milli Eğitim Basımevi, 1970).

[25] For the best and most up-to-date account of the origins and career of Cüneyd, see Elizabeth Zachariadou, *Trade and Crusade: Venetian Crete and the Emirates of Menteshe and Aydin (1300–1415)* (Venice: Instituto Ellenico, 1983), 83–89. See also Himmet Akın, *Aydın Oğullari Tarihi Hakkında Bir Araştırma* (Istanbul: Pulhan Matbaası, 1946); Irène Mélikoff, "Djunayd," EI². Zachariadou argues persuasively that Akın and Mélikoff's identification of Cüneyd's father İbrahim (better known as Kara Subaşı) as Mehmed of Aydın's son Bahadur İbrahim is highly questionable. Cüneyd's father, who dealt with the Genoese colony of Chios, appears in Genoese documents dated 1394 as *subassi Smirarum*, and Cüneyd himself as ruler of Aydın in 1413. See Kate Fleet, *European and Islamic Trade in the Early Ottoman State: the Merchants of Genoa and Turkey* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 161–171. The first of the documents published by Fleet, which is dated 1394, discusses arrangements for the release of two of the sons of the Subaşı, who had been captured by the *capitaneus* of Smyrna. One of these may well have been Cüneyd.

lesser member of the ruling family of Aydın. After the Battle of Ankara, Timur assigned Aydın to a certain Mehmed who was probably one of his own magnates. Then, as he withdrew from Anatolia in spring of 1403, he left the province in the hands of two descendants of the Aydın dynasty, Umur and İsa, who took up residence in Ayasoluk near Ephesus (Theologo, modern Selçuk).

But in 1405, claiming to represent Emir Süleyman and relying on the trust that his father had earned among the locals, Cüneyd gathered an army from İzmir and the surrounding villages and seized Ephesus from the princes of Aydın. İsa of Aydın was killed, and his brother Umur formed an alliance with the neighboring *beylik* of Menteşe, with which he was able to reclaim Ayasoluk and imprison Cüneyd's father. Cüneyd eventually prevailed by assassinating Umur and declaring himself heir to the throne of Aydın. Doukas claims that before killing Umur, Cüneyd was able to marry his daughter, thus solidifying his claim over the rights of the Aydın family.[26] We will come back to Cüneyd's remarkable career later. Here it is sufficient to point out that Cüneyd's initial successes seem to have been related to the popularity of his father, an Ottoman governor who apparently commanded more loyalty from the local populace than Timur's appointees.

Emir Süleyman in Rumeli and the Treaty of 1403

Let us now turn to the situation in Rumeli after Emir Süleyman's arrival there. Thanks to Elizabeth Zachariadou's detailed and well-researched article on Süleyman, this is one of the better known chapters of the entire civil war.[27] According to contemporary observers, after fleeing from the battleground at Ankara and passing through Bursa, Süleyman headed for the straits and crossed to Rumeli at a place called Miarete.[28] By 20 August, he was in Gallipoli with a sizeable army of about 5,000 men, accompanied by his brother İsa.[29] According to an

[26] Doukas, 18:5–9.

[27] For an assessment of this article, see the discussion of modern historiography in the introduction to the present work.

[28] See the account of Gerardo Sagredo in Alexandrescu-Dersca, *La campagne*, 130. *Miarete* is most probably identical to *Narete(s)*: see Iorga, *Notes et Extraits (ROL)*, 82, 88; Freddy Thiriet, *Duca di Candia: ducali e lettere ricevute (1358–1360, 1401–1405)* (Venice, 1978), 40; Pierre Gilles, *Petri Gyllii de Bosporo Thracio libri III* (Athens, 1967), 333.

[29] For the size of Süleyman's army, see the letter of Giovanni Cornaro and the

eyewitness, large numbers of people were fleeing from the devastation in Anatolia, and contrary to prohibitions from their governments, owners of Venetian and Genoese ships were profiting from the situation by ferrying Muslims across the Dardanelles for a fee.[30] Many of these people took refuge in Constantinople: a Byzantine observer who was in the capital shortly after the Battle of Ankara wrote that he saw there "a strange sight, that every race and nation and tongue came as refugees to Constantinople."[31]

Upon his arrival in Gallipoli, Emir Süleyman immediately began peace negotiations with the various Christian powers of Rumeli. By September 4, it was reported that he had offered his navy, Gallipoli and a large stretch of land in Rumeli to Byzantium in exchange for peace.[32] While Süleyman's attention at this time seems to have been focused on Byzantium and other maritime powers like Venice and Genoa, he was also active further inland. Süleyman issued a document from Filibe (Philippopolis, Plovdiv) dated 18–28 October 1402, and there is evidence that between 29 September and 28 October, he concluded a peace treaty with Mircea the Elder (Mircea cel Bătrân) of Wallachia, in which he recognized Mircea's rule over his old transdanubian possessions (Dobrudja-Deliorman) in exchange for a tribute.[33] These areas appear to have been recaptured by Mircea while the Ottomans were preoccupied with Timur in Anatolia. However, as we will see in chapter 4, by 1404 Mircea had already clashed with Ottoman forces in

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account of Gerardo Sagredo in Alexandrescu-Dersca, *La Campagne*, 125–128, 130. See also Zachariadou, "Süleyman Çelebi," 270.

[30] Alexandrescu-Dersca, *La Campagne*, 125–128. Alexandrescu-Dersca explains that Cornaro was the *sopracomito* of a galley from Candia which had been sent to the straits of Constantinople before the Battle of Ankara to guard them from the Ottomans. His letter is in defense against allegations that he took advantage of the situation after the Ottoman defeat to profit by allowing his own ship and others under his command to be used by men from Bayezid's army trying to cross to Europe.

[31] Schreiner, *Kleinchroniken*, 1:352.

[32] Alexandrescu-Dersca, *La Campagne*, 127.

[33] For Süleyman's document, see Boris Nedkov, *Osmanoturska diplomatika i paleografiia* (Sofia, 1966), 13–14. For his treaty with Mircea, see Zachariadou, "Süleyman Çelebi," 272–274. Zachariadou's claim is based on a Greek summary of a treaty published in the nineteenth century by the Wallachian Greek D. Photeinos. Zachariadou has argued convincingly that the *hicrī* date at the end of this document shows that it is authentic. Unfortunately, unlike the Venetian translation of the treaty of 1403, Photeinos' summary was made much later, and apart from the date is so confused as to be practically useless. This much said, it is probable that the treaty in question did exist, and for what it is worth the summary published by Photeinos clearly mentions a Wallachian tribute to the Ottomans.

Rumeli, and would eventually play a direct role in the replacement of Emir Süleyman by his brother Musa Çelebi. What is certain is that Mircea's connections to Byzantium, Hungary, and the Turks of the Dobruja made him a major player in the region.

Süleyman's eagerness to make peace with the Christians of Rumeli can be explained by the fact that Timur was still in Anatolia at that time, and there was no way of knowing whether he intended to cross the straits or leave the area, when that would be, and what if anything would be left of the eastern part of the Ottoman Empire when he did. The Ottomans in Europe were surrounded by Christian enemies both on land and on sea, who were eager to profit from their moment of weakness.[34] In order to hold on to Rumeli until such time as a campaign in Anatolia could be undertaken, it was therefore necessary for Süleyman to make peace with as many potential enemies as possible.

The Ottoman prince's eagerness notwithstanding, a treaty with Byzantium and the Latin powers of *Romania* (the term used in the West for Byzantium, the Latin Empire of Constantinople, and its successor states in Greece) was not signed until January or February of 1403, and then only after long and difficult negotiations.[35] The reasons behind the delay are well known. During Bayezid's siege of Constantinople, the Byzantine Emperor Manuel II had gone to Western Europe to try to raise support against the Ottomans, and was unable to return before 9 June 1403. John VII, who was ruling in his stead, was not viewed as an ideal negotiator, since signing a treaty with him would mean that it would be void upon Manuel's return, and might need to be renegotiated. Furthermore, the Venetians disliked John because he had strong Genoese connections. For these reasons, in December of 1402, Süleyman sent an ambassador to Venice in an attempt to negotiate with Manuel. But this attempt failed, and in the end the treaty had to be signed by John VII, the *de facto* emperor in Constantinople. It was then renewed by Manuel upon his return.[36]

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[34] Zachariadou, "Süleyman Çelebi," 270.

[35] For a more detailed historical explanation of the term *Romania*, see "Romania," ODB.

[36] Zachariadou, "Süleyman Çelebi," 271. The senatorial document discussing Süleyman's embassy to Venice is published in Nicolae Iorga, *Notes et Extraits (ROL)*, 257–258, and is also quoted in G.T. Dennis "The Byzantine-Turkish Treaty of 1403," *Orientalia Christiana Periodica*, 33 (1967), 73, notes 3 and 4.

However, the most serious obstacle to a treaty appears to have been the opposition of Gazi Evrenos and the other frontier lords (*uc begleri*) in Süleyman's camp. Not surprisingly, those men, who had played a major role in the Ottoman conquest of Rumeli, were not eager to give away strategic bases like Gallipoli and Thessaloniki. This must have been especially true for those of them old enough to remember the temporary loss of Gallipoli in 1366–1376 and its consequences.[37] If Süleyman was indeed considering giving Gallipoli to the Byzantines, a claim supported also by the fact that at that time the Venetian Senate was deliberating making a bid for the city, the frontier lords must have dissuaded him, since in the end Gallipoli was not included in the treaty.[38]

Our richest account of the negotiations behind the treaty of 1403 is the report of Pietro Zeno, lord of Andros and head negotiator for Venice. Zeno speaks of Süleyman's early offers to the league of Christian states, as well as of the objections raised by Evrenos and other Ottoman magnates to the proposed concessions. He states that an agreement was reached with these "baroni" only after the Byzantine envoy had agreed to return some of the promised land and to allow Süleyman to keep eight of his galleys.[39] The Christians also offered to send four or five galleys to join Süleyman's fleet in the event that Timur decided to cross to Europe. Apart from Pietro Zeno, the Venetians were also represented by Marco Grimani. Zeno and Grimani were later reimbursed by the Venetian Senate for three and a half months of negotiations.[40] Genoa also wanted to sign treaties with both Süleyman and "his brother in Turkey," who at this time was İsa, since Mehmed's power did not yet extend outside the province of Rum. On 11 January 1403, the Genoese appointed marshal Boucicaut's lieutenant Jean de

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[37] Halil İnalcık, *The Ottoman Empire: The Classical Age, 1300–1600* (New York, 1973), 12: "The main Ottoman weakness was lack of naval power. Christian states controlled the Dardanelles, the crossing point between Rumelia and Anatolia. In 1366 Amadeo VI of Savoy captured Gallipoli and in the following year returned it to the Byzantines, leaving the Ottomans in a dangerous situation. Ottoman forces in Rumelia were cut off from Anatolia until, in October 1376, Andronicus IV agreed to return the fortress of Gallipoli to Murâd I who had secured for him the Byzantine throne."

[38] In October 1402, the Venetian senate deliberated whether or not to make a bid for Gallipoli. See Iorga, *Notes et extraits (ROL)*, 256.

[39] G.T. Dennis, "The Byzantine-Turkish Treaty of 1403," Appendix II, 82–87. The report Dennis publishes is a copy included in the letters of Pietro Zeno to Venice.

[40] Dennis has published the decision of the Venetian Senate to reimburse Pietro Zeno and Marco Grimani. See "The Byzantine-Turkish Treaty of 1403," 87–88.

Châteaumorand as envoy to the entire area including Anatolia, with authority to negotiate with all parties.[41] But Venice and Genoa were more concerned with Süleyman, who controlled coastal areas in *Romania* where both merchant republics had commercial interests. At this time, the Ottoman ruler of Bursa did not yet control many important coastal areas. Finally, as has been pointed out already, Süleyman was viewed as the likeliest successor to Bayezid.

The text of the treaty signed in January–February 1403 is extant only in a Venetian dialect translation of the lost Turkish original. This translation was sent to Venice by Pietro Zeno, and is preserved in the Venetian archives.[42] While not always entirely clear, if taken together with Zeno's report on the negotiations leading up to the treaty, as Dennis and Zachariadou have done, this important text allows us to reconstruct the situation in Rumeli in late 1402 and early 1403 in considerable detail. Since the topic has been studied exhaustively by Zachariadou, a brief summary of her conclusions will suffice here.

The main beneficiary of the treaty was Byzantium, which received the important city of Thessaloniki, two large strips of land, and several islands. The first strip of land was around Thessaloniki, and Zachariadou has argued convincingly that it extended from the river Vardar (Axios) to the river Struma (Strymon) including the entire peninsula of Chalkidiki.[43] The second strip was in Thrace, extending from Panidos on the Sea of Marmara to the important port of Mesembria on the Black Sea. Apart from those two strips of land, the Byzantines also received the Aegean islands of Skyros, Skiathos and Skopelos, an unidentified town with saltpans called Palateoria which can perhaps be identified with Peritheorion (Buru) near Komotini (Gümülcine), and some unnamed castles in Anatolia (*Turchia*) "which used to belong to the Emperor."[44] Finally, Süleyman recognized Byzantine possession of

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[41] Dennis, "The Byzantine-Turkish Treaty of 1403," 73–74. As of 1396, Genoa was under the rule of Charles VI of France. Boucicaut had assigned 4 galleys to Châteaumorand to take Manuel II back to Constantinople; see *Le livre des fais du bon messire Jehan le Maingre, dit Bouciquaut, mareschal de France et gouverneur de Jennes*, ed. Denis Lalande (Paris and Geneva, 1985), 215–218.

[42] Venice, Archivio di Stato, *Pacta*, reg. VI, fol. 130^{v} (anc. 128^{v}). The most recent publications are Dennis, "The Byzantine-Turkish Treaty of 1403," 77–80; Giuseppe Valentini, *Acta Albaniae Veneta* (AAV), 3: 355–358. Dennis gives a full list of the older publications in his article.

[43] Zachariadou, "Süleyman Çelebi," 277–279.

[44] Presumably the surrender of these castles was contingent on Süleyman's extending his power to Anatolia, which at this time was still being ravaged by Timur's armies.

the city of Constantinople and its hinterland as far west as Panidos and Parapolia in Thrace.[45] He promised to release all Byzantine prisoners held by the Ottomans and to allow the inhabitants of Constantinople who had fled during Bayezid's siege of the city to return unharmed. He also freed the Byzantines from the obligation to pay a tribute, granting them the right to build fortifications on their territory.[46]

As both Zachariadou and İnalcık have pointed out, with the treaty of 1403 Süleyman essentially granted Byzantium control of the sea passage between Anatolia and Rumeli.[47] While it is true that the major port city of Gallipoli remained in Ottoman hands, and that Süleyman was allowed to keep eight galleys with which he could ferry his armies across the straits, he promised not to use his ships outside the Dardanelles except with the permission of the emperor and the entire Christian League.[48] What this meant was that at least in the beginning of his reign, Emir Süleyman was almost entirely dependent on Byzantium and other Christian powers for his movement back and forth across the straits. Süleyman's dependent position is reflected in the fact that in the surviving text of the treaty he calls the emperor his father, a gesture that was not without political significance in Byzantine diplomatic protocol. As Zachariadou has pointed out, Emir Süleyman's concessions to the Byzantines and other Christian powers of Rumeli were necessary for the survival of the Ottomans there after the disaster of Ankara.[49] Nevertheless, it is clear from many Byzantine and Ottoman chronicles as well as from the eyewitness account of Zeno already mentioned that

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The castles may of course have been located directly across the straits, so as to ensure Byzantine control of sea traffic. Unfortunately this is mere speculation, as nothing more is known of these castles which do not appear in any other source.

[45] For the location of Parapolia, see Eurydice Lappa-Zizikas, "Un chrysobulle inconnu en faveur du monastère des Saints-Anargyres de Kosmidion," *Travaux et Mémoires, Centre de recherche d'histoire et civilisation de Byzance, Paris* 8 (1981): 265, 267.

[46] Zachariadou, "Süleyman Çelebi," 277–279. Some of the territory in the treaty is hard to locate with precision. Zachariadou suggests that Palateoria may be Peritheorion (Turkish Buri) in the vicinity of modern Komotini (Byz. *Koumoutzina*, Ott. *Gümülcine*). See also Peter Soustal, *Thrakien: Thrake, Rodope Und Haimimontos: Tabula Imperii Byzantini* 6 (Vienna, 1991).

[47] Zachariadou, "Süleyman Çelebi," 283; İnalcık, "Meḥemmed I," 975.

[48] However, as we will see in chapter 3, in 1407 Emir Süleyman was reported to be preparing his fleet for operations in Aydın. By that time, Süleyman had of course become much stronger through the acquisition of Bursa and other places in Anatolia.

[49] Zachariadou, "Süleyman Çelebi," 296.

Süleyman's policy was extremely unpopular among certain segments of the Ottoman population of Rumeli, notably the *uc begleri* and the *akıncı*.[50]

Apart from Byzantium, the league of the Christian powers of *Romania* also benefited from the treaty. Genoese colonies in the Black Sea and Chios were exempted from tribute; that of Nova Phocaea saw its tribute reduced; and Süleyman promised to free all Genoese prisoners who were in Ottoman hands. To Venice, Süleyman promised to return all Venetian territory that had been captured by the Ottomans, including Athens, which had been seized in the aftermath of Ankara by Antonio Acciaiuoli, an Ottoman vassal. Acciaiuoli had taken many Venetians prisoner when he occupied Athens. Zeno was able to obtain the release of 500 of these by bribing Süleyman's grand vizier Ali Paşa, whom Zeno calls the closest man to Emir Süleyman ("*el tuto presso lo signor*").[51] Finally, Süleyman ceded to Venice a five-mile-wide strip of land across from the island of Negroponte, for which Zeno and Grimani paid the Ottomans two thousand ducats.[52] As Zachariadou has pointed

[50] İnalcık, "Meḥemmed I," 975.

[51] Antonio Acciaiuoli was a bastard son of the deceased Florentine ruler of Athens Nerio Acciaiuoli. In his will, his father made him Duke of Thebes; but Antonio was displeased with his inheritance, and decided to take Athens from Venice, which had occupied the city following Nerio's death. In his report, Zeno states that when Süleyman arrived in Gallipoli (September 1402) he found there a messenger of Antonio Acciaiuoli, who offered him a large sum of money to let Antonio keep the Venetian prisoners. In the end, Zeno made a deal with Çandarlı Ali Paşa, giving him a thousand ducats to obtain the prisoners from Acciaiuoli by force if necessary. Apparently even with Ottoman help the recovery of the prisoners was difficult, for Zeno states that he was only able to get fifteen of them while he was still in Gallipoli, and that for the rest he was forced to send an emissary to Thessaloniki accompanied by "some Turks." Of the five hundred prisoners, four hundred were recovered in this way via Coron and Modon, while the rest were left to be collected by the Venetians of Negroponte. Zeno states that he gave the Turks two ducats for each prisoner he recovered in order to have the prisoners taken to Negroponte, for there was a food shortage in Gallipoli, presumably caused by the accumulation there of refugees from Anatolia and members of Süleyman's army and administration. See Dennis, "The Byzantine-Turkish Treaty of 1403," 82–86; Zachariadou, "Süleyman Çelebi," 271–272, 282; Dionysios A. Zakythenos, *Le Despotat Grec de Morée* (Revised Edition, London, 1975), v. 1, p. 160–161; William Miller, *The Latins in the Levant: A History of Frankish Greece (1204–1566)* (London, 1908), 349–362.

[52] Dennis, "The Byzantine-Turkish Treaty of 1403," 86. In his letter, Zeno mentions an interesting detail: he says that "in Gallipoli we also learned that many Turks dwelt along Negroponte and did not wish to give up any of their land, and the Greeks there supported them." Greek anti-Latin feeling notwithstanding, this report suggests that already in 1402 the Ottomans in this area had become more than just raiders. Cemal Kafadar discusses this incident, saying that even though Süleyman's "haughty sultanic

out, Süleyman's concession was an important one, for it ensured the Venetians control of the gulf of Zitun. Finally, the tribute of the Duke of Naxos was abolished, and the Knights Hospitallers of Rhodes were promised Salona, which they had conquered after the Battle of Ankara with the assistance of the Byzantine despot of the Morea, Theodore Palaiologos. The Hospitallers were unable to take possession of that region, which appears later under Byzantine administration.[53]

Apart from the main contracting parties, the treaty of 1403 also included the Serbian despot Stefan Lazarević and the Marquis of Bodonitza. The Marquis of Bodonitza had been attacked by the Ottoman *uc begi* Evrenos, and requested to be included in the treaty in order to prevent further Ottoman attacks.[54] As is the case with several of the other Latin powers mentioned in the text of the treaty, the Marquis did not play a central part in the struggles of the civil war, and will not preoccupy us further. However, the same is not true for Stefan Lazarević, who was a major player in the Ottoman civil war. Given his importance, it is necessary to discuss his case in some detail here.

As was already mentioned, Stefan Lazarević fought at the Battle of Ankara on the side of Yıldırım Bayezid as his vassal, as did his nephew and rival George Branković. In the aftermath of the Ottoman defeat, Stefan headed for Constantinople, where he formed an alliance with the Byzantine Emperor John VII and received from him the prestigious title of despot, which made him at least nominally a Byzantine vassal.[55] After his visit to Constantinople, Stefan Lazarević returned to his territory in Serbia, where he faced serious opposition from George Branković. The rivalry between Stefan Lazarević and George Branković can be traced back to the reign of Bayezid, who between 1394 and 1396 had expelled George Branković's father Vuk from his lands and had given a large part of them to Stefan.[56] Modern scholars disagree over

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style and his concessions to Christian neighbors alienated a good number of his veteran gazi commanders, such reactions nevertheless cannot be understood in the simplistic dichotomies—so beloved of modern scholars—of Turks vs. Greeks or Muslims vs. Christians." See Cemal Kafadar, "The Ottomans and Europe" in Thomas A. Brady *et. al., eds., Handbook of European History 1400–1600* (Leiden, 1994), v. 1, 591.

[53] Zachariadou, "Süleyman Çelebi," 280–282. For events in Salona, see Euthymios, *To Chroniko tou Galaxeidiou*, ed. Konstantinos N. Sathas (Athens, 1865; reprint 1996), 88–92, 212–213.

[54] Zachariadou, "Süleyman Çelebi," 275, 281–282.

[55] See Barker, *Manuel II Palaeologus*, 282–283 note 146.

[56] See John Fine, The *Late Medieval Balkans: A Critical Survey from the Late Twelfth Century to the Ottoman Conquest* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1987), 501.

which of the Serbian lords was most to blame for the resumption of hostilities after Ankara. Our main source on these events is Konstantin the Philosopher, who was of course biased in favor of his patron Stefan Lazarević.

Whatever his reasons may have been, while in Constantinople, Stefan Lazarević apparently tried to persuade John VII to imprison George Branković upon his return from Ankara. It is uncertain whether Branković was ever actually imprisoned. If he was, he was soon able to escape and return to Serbia, where he enlisted Ottoman support against Lazarević. Finally, in November 1402, a battle was fought at Tripolje in which Stefan Lazarević and his brother Vuk defeated the forces of George Branković, which included troops provided by Emir Süleyman.[57] It is probably in these events that we should seek the roots of the inclusion of Stefan Lazarević in the treaty of 1403. Stefan Lazarević's ally John VII was one of the main contracting parties of the treaty, and it is only reasonable to assume that after the military confrontation at Tripolje all the sides involved would desire an official formulation of Lazarević's position in Serbia.

The treaty of 1403 provided just such an opportunity. Its clause concerning Stefan Lazarević can be translated as follows:

> As for the son of Lazar, concerning the territory that I know him to have held in my father's time, he will not be troubled about it, and must give the tribute that he gave before to my father, and send his people [i.e. armies] to the east as he used to do. And if he wants to come in person he shall be able to come safely, and if he does not want to, he shall send his people. And in the case that he comes with his army, he shall not suffer damage either to his own person or to any member of his company, and I will send him safe and sound with his people, that he may not suffer any damage from me.[58]

Unfortunately, in his edition of the treaty of 1403, Dennis did not provide a complete translation of each clause, but only a brief summary. Had he provided a complete translation such as the above, the meaning of Stefan Lazarević's inclusion in the treaty might have been more obvious. As Zachariadou has noted, Lazarević's situation was not changed significantly from what it had been under Yıldırım Bayezid.[59] Nevertheless, given the state of civil war to which the Serbian despot had

[57] Konstanin the Philosopher, 23–26. See also Fine, *Late Medieval Balkans*, 500–502; Zachariadou, "Süleyman Çelebi," 289–290.

[58] Dennis, "The Byzantine-Turkish Treaty of 1403," 79.

[59] Zachariadou, "Süleyman Çelebi," 279.

returned, and the fact that his brother had enlisted Ottoman support against him, the treaty's insistence on guarantees of personal and territorial security appears as more than just formulaic. It is noteworthy that the treaty of 1403 granted Stefan Lazarević the privilege of deciding whether he would join Ottoman campaigns in the east in person, or send an army under one of his commanders. Such a privilege would have been unthinkable under Bayezid, and reflects not only Ottoman weakness after Ankara but also Lazarević's successful confrontation with Süleyman's troops at Tripolje.

This much said, the importance of the treaty of 1403 for Stefan Lazarević should not be exaggerated. The Serbian despot gained little if anything concrete from the treaty, and was forced to look further north to Hungary for his advancement, while at the same time maintaining a close relationship with Byzantium and the Ottoman rulers of Rumeli. Despite the above clause, Lazarević and his armies are not known to have participated in any Ottoman campaigns in Anatolia during the reign of Emir Süleyman, although, as we will see, Süleyman did carry out campaigns there. Instead, his activity was confined to Rumeli and the northern Balkans, where he was increasingly preoccupied with the activities of his overlord Sigismund. In order to understand the politics of Ottoman Rumeli during the civil war, a brief review of the international situation in the Balkans is in order.

The International Situation in the Balkans

Around the same time as the treaty of 1403 was signed, Stefan Lazarević reached an agreement with King Sigismund of Hungary, by which he recognized Sigismund as his feudal lord and received from him the coveted province of Mačva, including the important city of Belgrade, which he made his capital.[60] Sigismund's motivation in reaching this agreement with Stefan was his long-standing dynastic dispute with Ladislas of Naples over the throne of Hungary, a conflict that resembles the Ottoman civil war in that it also involved both internal factions and many outside powers. This conflict had begun in 1382, when Hungary's Angevin King Louis I had died without a male heir. His daughter Maria had been crowned "king," but by 1385 the situation

[60] Fine, *Late Medieval Balkans*, 500–503.

had escalated into a struggle for the throne between Sigismund of Luxemburg, who had been engaged to Maria before King Louis' death, and the deceased king's closest male relative, Charles of Naples. Charles and his son Ladislas, who succeeded him, had the support of various local rulers in Croatia, Slavonia, Dalmatia, and Bosnia who had taken advantage of the death of King Louis to throw off their vassalage to Hungary. These included the Ban of Mačva, King Tvrtko I of Bosnia, and Hrvoje Vukčić, the lord of the region of Donji Kraji who emerged as the most powerful figure in Bosnia after the death of King Tvrtko I (1391).[61]

While a detailed discussion of the Hungarian civil war between Sigismund of Luxemburg and Ladislas of Naples is outside the scope of the present work, it is still worth dwelling for a moment on some of its more important aspects. The Hungarian civil war was a major factor in the international situation during the Ottoman civil war, since apart from the Ottomans, Hungary was the major power that determined affairs in the Balkans at that time. The conflict between Sigismund and Ladislas affected the policies of Venice toward the Ottomans in Albania, sometimes creating alliances that had a direct bearing on the Ottoman succession struggles, such as those that assisted in Mehmed's final victory against Musa at Çamurlu (1413).

Hrvoje's rise to power in Bosnia after the death of King Tvrtko has already been mentioned. Another local power-broker was Sandalj Hranić Kosača, the leading nobleman of Hum (Herzegovina).[62] King Tvrtko's successor Dabiša, however, was weak, and upon his death in 1395 was replaced by his widow Helen. Helen was little more than a pawn of the Bosnian nobility, and was deposed in 1398 in favor of Ostoja, who declared his allegiance to Ladislas. At that time Hrvoje was also on Ladislas' side. Those were hard times for Sigismund, who was imprisoned by his own nobles in 1401; but by 1404 things were looking up, and many Hungarian and Croatian nobles began to desert Ladislas for Sigismund. Ostoja was ousted and was replaced by Tvrtko II, apparently an illegitimate son of Tvrtko I who had the support of Sandalj. But Ostoja fled to Sigismund, became his vassal, and was able

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[61] Fine, *Late Medieval Balkans*, 395–398; Émile G. Léonard, *Les Angevins De Naples* (Paris: P.U.F., 1954); Alessandro Cutolo, *Il re Ladislao d'Angiò-Durazzo* (Milan: U. Hoepli, 1936).

[62] For this man's career, see Jovan Radonić, "Der grossvojvode von Bosnien Sandalj Hranić-Kosača", ASP 19 (1896): 380–465.

to win back the throne in 1409. By that time, Sigismund had effectively won the war in Hungary, Croatia, and Bosnia, and both Sandalj and Hrvoje had joined his side.[63]

While Hrvoje and Sandalj both ended up as vassals of Sigismund, they were neighbors and their interests often conflicted. Hrvoje was more loyal to Sigismund and supported Sigismund's possession of Dalmatia against the claims of Venice. Venice, on the other hand, exploited the Hungarian civil war to obtain territory in the name of her ally Ladislas. Venice's policy in this period was to gain control of the Adriatic coast, which was very important for her trade in the Balkans and the Levant. In 1411, Sandalj divorced Hrvoje's niece and married Helen (Jelena), the widow of George II Balšić Stracimirović of Zeta and sister of Stefan Lazarević. This brought Sandalj closer to Stefan Lazarević, renewing already existing ties between the two families.[64] As we will see in chapter 5, when Stefan Lazarević joined the side of Mehmed Çelebi against Musa in 1413, he had Sandalj on his side, as well as Hungarian troops from Sandalj's overlord Sigismund.

Sandalj's alliance with the Balšić family provides a good transition to a brief examination of the situation in Zeta, Albania, and Epirus. Those regions formed a kind of borderland contested by Venice, the Ottoman *uc begleri*, and various local lords of Serbian, Albanian, Latin, and Byzantine extraction.[65] They were largely mountainous, inhabited by Albanian tribes, and politically very fragmented. In response to Ottoman expansion in Zeta (the Ottoman *uc begi* Şahin had temporarily taken Durazzo in 1393), George II Balšić had adopted a pro-Venetian stance there. As a result, in 1396 Scutari (Shkodër), Drivast, and other important towns in Zeta that George Balšić had been unable to defend had passed into Venetian hands.[66] Upon George's death in 1403, his widow Helen took over as regent for her seventeen-year-old son Balša, reversing her late husband's pro-Venetian policy. This provoked a war with Venice which resulted in the Venetian occupation in 1405 of the important port cities of Antibari (Bar), Dulcignio (Ulcinj),

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63 Fine, *Late Medieval Balkans*, 453–466.

64 Fine, *Late Medieval Balkans*, 466–468.

65 See Elisabeth A. Zachariadou, "Marginalia on the History of Epirus and Albania (1380–1418)," WZKM 78 (1988): 195–210; Halil İnalcık, *Suret-i Defter-i Sancak-i Arvanid*; Halil İnalcık, "Arnawutluḳ," EI^2 (1958); Alain Ducellier, *Les chemins de l'exil, bouleversements de l'est européen et migrations vers l'ouest à la fin du Moyen Âge* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1992); Oliver Jens Schmitt, *Das venezianische Albanien (1392–1479)* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2001).

66 Fine, *Late Medieval Balkans*, 418–422.

and Budva.[67] As we will see, in the later part of the civil war (1409–1413) the Venetians were preoccupied with protecting these cities against the attacks of Balša and the Ottomans, and displayed this preoccupation in their treaties with Emir Süleyman and his successor Musa. They found it easier to deal with the local *uc begleri*, especially Paşa Yigit of Üsküp (Skopje) whom they bribed for this purpose.[68]

Farther down along the Adriatic coast, the littoral of Epirus and Albania belonged nominally to the Angevins of Naples (the family of Ladislas), but by the end of the fourteenth century had been mostly lost to various Albanian lords, many of whom were Ottoman vassals. As is well known, the Ottoman policy in such fragmented borderland regions was to support various petty lords against their enemies, with the aim to turn them into vassals and eventually annex their territory.[69] One place on the coast of Epirus that remained in the hands of an Angevin vassal was Vonitza near Arta, which had been granted as a fief to the family of Tocco, the rulers of Cephalonia. During the early years of the civil war, Carlo Tocco profited from Ottoman weakness to annex various places, including the important fortress of Angelokastron.[70] His exploits are well documented in the Greek epic chronicle of the Tocco, which describes his battles against the local Albanian lords Zenebis and Spata.[71] As we will see, Carlo Tocco was able to maintain his position during Musa Çelebi's rule through a marriage alliance with the Ottoman prince.

A detailed analysis of the notoriously complex politics of the Balkans in the early fifteenth century is outside the scope of the present work. However, it is important to stress once again that affairs at the extreme west of the peninsula were part and parcel of the politics of the Ottoman civil war. Without this context, it is impossible to understand certain aspects of the period's politics, such as the policies of Musa or Venice. We will return to this point later. Now let us move to the opposite end of the Ottoman world and examine the situation in the Anatolian province of Rum.

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[67] Fine, *Late Medieval Balkans*, 511–512.

[68] Zachariadou, "Marginalia on the History of Epirus and Albania," 208.

[69] İnalcık, "Ottoman Methods of Conquest."

[70] Zachariadou, "Marginalia," 198, 209.

[71] Schirò, *Cronaca dei Tocco di Cefalonia*; Elizabeth Zachariadou, "Οἱ χίλιοι στίχοι στὴν ἀρχὴ τοῦ Χρονικοῦ τῶν Τόκκο."

Mehmed Çelebi's Struggles in Rum

Unlike his older brothers Emir Süleyman and İsa Çelebi, who after the Ottoman defeat at Ankara crossed the straits to Rumeli, Mehmed left the battlefield with his tutor (*lala*) Bayezid Paşa and "his own private (*ḫaṣṣ*) army" and returned to the province of Rum.[72] It is not hard to understand why the Ottoman prince and his tutor chose this course of action. In 1402 Mehmed Çelebi was only about fifteen.[73] Both Süleyman and İsa were his seniors, and as the favorite candidate for the succession, Süleyman had left with the bulk of the Ottoman forces, including the armies of Rumeli. Mehmed's situation was more modest: he had been the governor of the province of Rum, whose army he had led in the Battle of Ankara.[74] After the disaster at Ankara, all that he was left with was therefore a small military retinue and the administrative apparatus of an Ottoman provincial governor. As we will see, Mehmed Çelebi had to struggle to gain control of Rum after Ankara. His success appears to have been largely due to his advisers, especially Bayezid Paşa, a *kul* who was very talented and who served as grand vizier both to Mehmed Çelebi and his successor Murad II.[75] It seems also that by 1402 the Ottomans already commanded the loyalty of the urban population of Rum, a largely tribal area whose cities were often threatened by nomadic raids. In order to better understand Mehmed's position, it is necessary to briefly examine the situation in Rum prior to 1402.

By 1402, the province of Rum could already boast a long history as a distinct geographical region. In pre-Mongol times, it had formed the center of the territories ruled by the House of Danişmend (late 11th c. – 1178), the main Muslim rivals of the Anatolian Seljuks. While the

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[72] OA 45a; Mz 98.

[73] The *Ahval* states that Mehmed was eleven in 1402 (OA 45a; Mz 98). This is extremely unlikely, as he could not have been made governor before reaching the *şer'ī* age of adolescence, which is determined by physical maturity. See İnalcık, "Meḥemmed I," 973–974; "Bāligh," EI². Without citing any sources, İnalcık states that Mehmed was born in 788 or 789 (2 Feb. 1386 – 10 Jan. 1388) and that he was made governor when he reached *şer'ī* adolescence in Shawwāl 801 (6 June 1399 – 4 July 1399). That would make him somewhere between fourteen and a half and sixteen and a half, according to the lunar calendar, at the time of the Battle of Ankara (i.e. "in his" fifteenth-seventeenth year, according to the Turkish way of reckoning age). The discrepancy in the *Ahval* (both Mz and OA) could be due to a scribal error, since *beş* and *bir* have similar shapes.

[74] Alexandrescu-Dersca, *La Campagne De Timur*, 73–75. See also above, note 5.

[75] See Aydın Taneri, "Bāyezīd Paşa," İA.

Seljuks of Rum had aspired to a Perso-Islamic model of centralized sedentary government, the Danişmendids had been closer to the ideals of the Turcoman tribes inhabiting their region, whose allegiance they had gained by the daring raids that they carried out there.[76] Not long after their territory was absorbed into that of the Seljuks in 1178, a fresh wave of Turcomans fleeing the Mongol conquests in Central Asia had replenished the already existing nomadic element in Rum. These restless nomads had been behind the enigmatic Babai revolt of 1240, one of whose centers was Amasya.[77] In the decades following the Seljuk defeat by the Mongols at Kösedağ (1243), Anatolia had been incorporated into the Ilkhanid Mongol state, which had sent a governor to Sivas (1277). In 1327, the Çobanid dynasty of Mongol governors in Sivas had been replaced by the military commander Alaeddin Eretna, whose own family ruled the now independent area until 1380, when they were ousted by the judge, poet, and statesman Kadı Burhaneddin.[78]

Since 1354, the Ottomans, who had begun their conquests in Rumeli by capturing Gallipoli in the same year, had also become involved in the affairs of Central Anatolia. In that year, the Ottoman ruler Orhan had taken advantage of the succession dispute arising from the death of Eretna to send his son Süleyman Paşa to Ankara. When Süleyman Paşa took that important city, the neighboring *beylik* of Karaman began to perceive the Ottomans as a threat.[79] The Karamanids' alarm was well founded, for during the reign of Murad I (1362–1389) the Ottomans gradually expanded into Anatolia, acquiring several cities from the *beyliks* of Germiyan and Hamid, which made them share a long border with the Karamanids.[80] Ottoman expansion in the reign of Murad I

[76] Irène Mélikoff, "Dānishmendids," EI² (1961); Paul Wittek, "Le Sultan de Rûm," 364–369; Cemal Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds*, 3–4.

[77] On the Babai revolt, see Irène Beldiceanu-Steinherr, "La 'révolte' des Baba'î en 1240, visait-elle vraiment le renversement du pouvoir seldjoukide?" *Turcica* 30 (1998): 99–118. Beldiceanu calls into question the idea that the Babai revolt was against Seljuk central authority, suggesting instead that its motivations were economic and demographic. The main source on the revolt is Elvan Çelebi, *Menâkibu'l-Kudsiyye Fî Menâsibi'l-Ünsiyye: Baba İlyas-ı Horasânî ve Sülâlesinin Menkabevî Tarihi*, ed. Ismail E. Erünsal and Ahmet Yasar Ocak (Istanbul, 1984). This work includes a useful introduction by the editors. Other secondary literature includes Claude Cahen, "Bābā'ī," EI² (1958); idem, *La Turquie Pre-Ottomane* (Istanbul, 1988); A.Y. Ocak, "Baba İlyas," TDVİA.

[78] Jan Rypka, "Burhān al-Dīn, Ḳādī Aḥmad," EI².

[79] Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Tarihi*, 1: 124, 246.

[80] Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Tarihi*, 1: 174–175.

was for the most part slow and peaceful, and was generally justified through marriage alliances and other diplomatic means. But this policy changed during the reign of Murad's successor, Bayezid I.

Upon his accession, Bayezid launched two consecutive campaigns in response to an anti-Ottoman alliance formed by the *beyliks* of Anatolia following Murad's death at Kosovo (1389) and announced by their reconquest of Kütahya, Beyşehir and other recent Ottoman acquisitions. In those campaigns, Bayezid defeated the *beyliks* with an army made up of his Byzantine and Serbian vassals, as well as forces under Süleyman Paşa of Kastamonu, to whose family (the Candar-oğulları) the Ottomans were related by marriage. He annexed Germiyan, imprisoning its ruler Yakub II; occupied the beyliks of Aydın and Menteşe, giving their rulers estates on which to retire; absorbed Saruhan; and besieged the Karamanid capital of Konya. Fearing that after the beyliks of Western Anatolia his turn would come next, Süleyman Paşa of Kastamonu turned against Bayezid by allying himself with Kadı Burhaneddin of Sivas. This gave Bayezid a pretext to attack and kill Süleyman, thereby annexing Süleymān's part of the Candar principality, which was centered around Kastamonu. The other part was Sinop, ruled by Süleyman's brother İsfendiyar, who was left alone in exchange for recognizing Ottoman overlordship.[81]

The conquest of Kastamonu brought the Ottomans into direct conflict with Kadı Burhaneddin, on whose sphere of influence they were now encroaching. After the Battle of Kırkdilim (July 1392), in which the Ottomans were defeated, Bayezid was forced to turn his attention to Rumeli; but before departing he accepted Amasya from its ruler Ahmed Beg, who was being besieged by Kadı Burhaneddin, and installed his young son Mehmed Çelebi there at the head of a provincial court. That is how Mehmed first came to be the governor of Rum.[82] The following year, Bayezid himself visited Amasya, where his suzerainty was recognized by the leaders of various local Turcoman dynasties: the Taceddin-oğulları of the Çarşamba valley (Niksar), the

[81] Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Tarihi*, 1: 83–85.

[82] Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Tarihi*, 1: 260–268, 275–278. For Kadı Burhaneddin's reign and his confrontation with Yıldırım Bayezid, see Yasar Yücel, *Kadı Burhaneddin Ahmed ve Devleti (1344–1398)* (Ankara, 1970); Elizabeth Zachariadou, "*Manuel II Palaeologus on the Strife between Bāyezīd and Ḳāḍī Burhān al-Dīn Aḥmad*," BSOAS 18 (1980): 471–481; Jan Rypka, "Burhān al-Dīn, Ḳāḍī Aḥmad," EI²; Mirza Bala, "Kadı Bürhaneddin," İA; John Woods, *The Aqquyunlu*.

Taşan-oğulları of the Merzifon region, and the lord of Bafra.[83] As we will see, after the Battle of Ankara, Mehmed had to reassert his power over these local leaders before he could consolidate his rule over the region.

After his great victory at Nicopolis against the Hungarian and Crusader armies (1396), Yıldırım Bayezid once again carried out extensive campaigns against the beyliks of Anatolia. In 1397, he crossed the straits and marched on Karaman, besieging its capital Konya. The siege resulted in the capture and execution of the Karamanid ruler Alaeddin Ali Beg, whose land was thus incorporated into Bayezid's empire.[84] While still in Anatolia following his Karamanid campaign, Yıldırım Bayezid was also able to profit from a set of circumstances to enlarge and consolidate his domains in Rum. In the spring of 1398, he took "Muslim" Samsun (as opposed to the Genoese colony of the same name) from Kubad-oğlı Cüneyd, the beg of Canık, who escaped and was allowed to keep Ladik and some other fortresses in exchange for recognizing Ottoman rule. As we will see, after the Battle of Ankara, Kubad-oğlı would reemerge as one of the adversaries of Mehmed Çelebi. In the same year that Bayezid conquered Samsun, Kadı Burhaneddin of Sivas died. His son was unable to defend the city against the Karakoyunlu Kara Yölük Osman, so the city's notables sought Ottoman assistance. In response to their plea, Bayezid sent his son Emir Süleyman, who defeated Kara Yölük in battle. Following this victory, Yıldırım Bayezid occupied the city in person, expelled Burhaneddin's son, and added his domains to those already ruled by his own son Mehmed Çelebi.[85]

From the above survey, it is clear that by 1402 Mehmed Çelebi had already been based in Amasya for ten years. Since Rum had been ruled by Ilkhanid governors and their successors for more than a century, it was not without competent administrators, many of whom must have ended up in Mehmed's court. These people were well acquainted

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[83] See Halil İnalcık, "Bāyezīd I," EI². On the Taceddin-oğulları, see Mevlûd Oğuz, "Taceddin Oğulları," AÜDTCFD 6 (1948): 469–487.

[84] Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Tarihi*, 1: 295–298.

[85] Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Tarihi*, 1: 298–299. The author draws on the account of Schiltberger, a Bavarian prisoner from the Crusade of Nicopolis who participated in these campaigns and is our main source of information about them. See Johann Schiltberger, *The Bondage and Travels of Johann Schiltberger, a Native of Bavaria, in Europe, Asia, and Africa, 1396–1427* (London: Hakluyt Society, 1879), 14–18. Schiltberger describes these events in considerable detail, stating explicitly that Sivas was given to Mehmed rather than to Süleyman, who had conquered the city.

with local conditions, including the Turcoman tribes whose leaders had accepted Ottoman rule during the reign of Bayezid I. After the Battle of Ankara and the capture of Bayezid, the allegiance of these local leaders to Mehmed Çelebi was no longer guaranteed, and some of them tried to exploit Ottoman weakness in order to strengthen their own position, acting independently and forging various alliances. Nevertheless, Mehmed and his competent viziers soon prevailed, reasserting their position through a series of skirmishes which are described at length in the *Ahval*. Let us now turn to this important source, and see how it describes events after the Battle of Ankara.

As we have already seen, the *Ahval* states that Mehmed Çelebi left the battlefield at Ankara with "his private army of Rum" and headed for Tokat. Another Ottoman tradition relates that "Mehmed escaped with the army of Rum (*Rum çerisi*) and the begs of Amasya (*Amasya begleri*) in the direction of Amasya."[86] It is worth noting here that the *Ahval* is the only Ottoman chronicle of Mehmed's actions during the civil war to make a clear distinction between the towns of Amasya and Tokat. While other Ottoman chronicles and most modern scholarship present Mehmed as simply based in Amasya, the *Ahval* suggests that the Ottoman prince spent at least as much time in Tokat, making a clear distinction between the two neighboring towns. While it seems that Amasya was the seat of Ottoman government in Rum even in the period under consideration, Tokat was also a town of considerable economic importance located midway between Amasya and Sivas, another town controlled by Mehmed during the civil war.

The *Ahval* presents its protagonist Mehmed Çelebi as leaving the battlefield of Ankara in a heroic fashion, "killing an incalculable number of the Tatars that came before him." As Cemal Kafadar has pointed out, the early Ottoman chronicles present the "Tatars" as the Ottomans' greatest enemies.[87] While the roots of this attitude probably go back to the early exploits of the dynasty's founder Osman Beg against some of his neighbors who had entered Anatolia with the Chingisid Mon-

[86] OA 45a; Mz 98; *Ottoman Anonymous Chronicles*, 40. See also Paul Wittek, "Le Sultan de Rûm," 365.

[87] Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds*, 127–128: "Although some of them eventually became assimilated (or left for central Asia with Timur after 1402) certain people called Tatar are distinguished from the Türkmen of the ucāt and appear as foes of the Ottomans. These seem to be the non-Oğuz Turks and Mongols who were, or had been, associated with the Chingisid polity."

gol armies, Timur's campaign in Anatolia had apparently revived this animosity: in the early Ottoman chronicles Timur thus appears as the "Tatar" *par excellence*. After reaching Rum, we are told that Mehmed contemplated an attack on Timur's army to rescue his father, a project by which he was supposedly dissuaded by his advisers' arguments that Timur's army was too large to approach. Instead, our source states that Mehmed's advisers convinced the Ottoman prince to follow the enemy from afar, only attacking isolated divisions when given the opportunity.[88] While this story could be dismissed as yet another rhetorical device intended to display Mehmed's bravery against the Tatars, the existence of a similar story in the Byzantine chronicle of Doukas suggests otherwise.

Like the *Ahval*, Doukas presents Mehmed as fleeing from the battlefield and hiding from Timur's army. But the Byzantine chronicler also describes in detail a failed attempt by Mehmed to rescue his captive father. Doukas relates that Mehmed sent miners to Timur's camp outside Ankara, who dug a tunnel under the camp to the tent where Bayezid was being held with his head eunuch, Hoca Firuz. The miners almost succeeded in rescuing the sultan, but there was a changing of the guard and the tunnel was discovered. According to the Byzantine chronicler, after the plan was thwarted, Mehmed and his men made a hasty escape while Timur took out his anger by having Hoca Firuz beheaded. After this event, Timur ordered that Bayezid be kept in irons every night so that he could never again attempt to escape.[89] If the story is true, it is not surprising that the author of the *Ahval* would have deliberately omitted it, since such a failure would have shown Mehmed Çelebi in a bad light at the very beginning of his career. Instead, by presenting the whole incident as nothing more than a noble idea, Mehmed's bravery and filial loyalty are emphasized, while his fail-

[88] OA, 45b–46a; Mz, 99.

[89] Doukas 16:12. Some passages in Doukas' chronicle bear such a striking resemblance to the *Ahval* and to other Ottoman chronicles that it is difficult not to speculate that the Byzantine chronicler was using Ottoman sources, or was even inspired by the words of a public story-teller (*meddāḥ*). Compare the following: "[Mehmed] escaped [the battlefield at Ankara] with those under his command and took refuge in the mountains (ἦν ἐν ὄρεσι φυγαδεύων), waiting to see what would happen (καραδοκῶν το μέλλον)" (Doukas 16:12); "[Mehmed's advisors said that] the right counsel is to set out from this place and go in the direction of the enemy, then climb up into the steep mountains (*ṣarp dağlara çıḳup*) and watch the state of the world (*'ālemüñ ḥāline naẓar idevüz*)" (OA, 47a; Mz, 100). Another example is the story of the death of Emir Süleyman (see below, chapter 3).

ure is passed over in silence. Seen in this light, the *Ahval*'s account can be said to support rather than undermine the information provided by Doukas.

Whether or not Mehmed Çelebi tried to rescue his father, the *Ahval* suggests that the Ottoman prince did not stay in Rum for long after the Battle of Ankara, but set out with an army following Timur on his westward march. What were the motivations behind this action? As we have seen, the *Ahval* presents Mehmed's westward trip as the logical outcome of his decision to follow Timur from afar in order to ascertain the status of his father, who was being held prisoner in Timur's court. It is important to bear in mind that at this time Timur was still at large, and it was uncertain what his next action might be. Moreover, since Yıldırım Bayezid had been effectively removed from power and there was a strong likelihood that he might die in captivity, a succession struggle within the Ottoman family was imminent. In such a struggle, every advantage would count, including the control of strategic cities such as Ankara, or of others with deep political significance like the Ottoman capital of Bursa. Mehmed and his viziers were probably motivated by such considerations on their westward march. Most importantly, as we will see in a moment, there is also a strong likelihood that Mehmed Çelebi was unable to use Amasya as his base at this time, for the province had been granted by Timur to a rival prince of non-Ottoman extraction. Perhaps this explains the *Ahval*'s statement that after Ankara Mehmed went to Tokat, rather than Amasya which is only mentioned later.

When Mehmed and his army reached the river Devres, a natural border separating the province of Rum from the *beylik* of Candar, they were confronted militarily by the nephew of the Candarid ruler İsfendiyar of Kastamonu, a man by the name of Kara Yahya.[90] İsfendiyar was one of the *beylik* rulers who had benefited from the Ottoman defeat at Ankara. As we saw above, prior to 1402 Yıldırım Bayezid had recognized İsfendiyar's rule over the important port city of Sinop. After Bayezid's downfall at Ankara, İsfendiyar took advantage of the situation to extend his territory to include Kastamonu and all the land that had once belonged to the Candarid dynasty.[91] Meeting Timur on his way to İzmir, İsfendiyar received confirmation of his pos-

[90] OA 46a–46b; Mz 99–100. The chronicle refers to the river Devres as *Dervāz*.

[91] In 1383 dynastic strife had split the Candarid principality in two; see Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Tarihi*, 1: 83–85.

session of this territory by accepting Timur's overlordship.[92] Mehmed's encounter with Kara Yahya probably preceded this event, but it is clear that İsfendiyar already controlled Sinop and the eastern portion of Candar, and most probably had taken advantage of the Ottoman disaster at Ankara to give up his vassalage and strengthen his position by moving his court to Kastamonu. It would seem that upon doing so, he had entrusted the eastern part of his territory to his nephew Kara Yahya, who as we will see confronted Mehmed once again in the spring of 1403. According to the *Ahval*'s account, Yahya accused Mehmed of trespassing into his territory, but the skirmish ended with a victory for the Ottoman prince.[93] Yahya was forced to escape to the nearby town of Tosya, while Mehmed continued his westward journey and reached Gerede.

The *Ahval* states that while Mehmed was around Gerede, he sent a spy to Timur's camp. During August of 1402, when these events were probably taking place, Timur's court was in Kütahya, and some of his armies had been sent to the Gerede area.[94] The chronicle presents Mehmed as deliberating with his advisers while waiting for the spy's return: some argued that they should stay in the region, hiding in the mountains until Timur left Anatolia; others that they should go back to their own base in Rum and defend it from their enemies. After a few days, the spy returned with news that Bayezid was well and that Timur had decided to winter in Aydın. Upon receiving the news, Mehmed headed back to Amasya.

There is something unconvincing about the *Ahval*'s account at this point. Would Mehmed Çelebi have taken such troubles to follow Timur with an entire army simply in order to send a spy to ascertain the condition of his father? At a time when western Anatolia was being pillaged by Timur's armies, wouldn't it have been safer to keep a greater distance? After all, Mehmed's personal presence in the Gerede area was not necessary in order to send a spy to Kütahya. In fact, it would appear that the *Ahval* is hiding something. While it is impossible to

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[92] The siege of İzmir began on 6 Jumada I 805 (2 December 1402). See Alexandrescu-Dersca, *La Campagne*, 89.

[93] As İnalcık has pointed out, the *Ahval* renders Mehmed's skirmish with Kara Yahya and the many that follow it in an epic style, calling it "his first conquest (*feth*)" (OA, 46b; Mz, 100). See İnalcık, "Meḥemmed I," 974.

[94] Alexandrescu-Dersca, *La Campagne*, 85; Yazdi, *Ẓafar-nāmah*, 2: 322. Yazdi states that Timur sent some of his men to Gerede while he was in Kütahya looting the treasures of Timurtaş, approximately a month after the Battle of Ankara (28 July 1402).

know exactly what, several ideas have been proposed already. Mehmed may have been unable to stay in Rum due to the presence of an adversary. Or perhaps he was trying to gain some advantage by closely following Timur's actions, which were of course unknown. Finally, he may have been trying to rescue his father, as hinted by the *Ahval* and stated by Doukas. If Doukas' story is true, that would explain Mehmed's sudden departure from Gerede, which would be following the return of the discovered rescue party rather than of just an ordinary spy.

Upon his return to Rum, we learn from the *Ahval* that Mehmed Çelebi had to face an important adversary in the person of Kara Devletşah. This man had been granted a *yarlıġ* by Timur, and had tried to occupy Amasya and its surroundings in Mehmed's absence. The *Ahval* makes no effort to hide Devletşah's appointment by Timur, presenting his challenge as follows:

> When the Sultan came with his commanders to Rum, suddenly news came that "Kara Devletşah has come and has occupied the province. He has in his hand a decree from Timur. Everywhere he goes, he shows the certificate of appointment that is in his hands, saying 'Timur Khan has given this province to me.' Out of fear the population of the province has started to comply with his demands. He has gathered around him one thousand bandits, and wherever they go they eliminate those who refuse to submit to them, burning their lands and plundering their belongings. Unless you deal with him now, he will soon command the entire province."[95]

Who was Kara Devletşah? As is the case with Timur's other Anatolian vassals after Ankara, we would expect him to be someone with a prior claim to the area. According to the important local historian of Amasya Hüseyin Hüsameddin, his full name was Taceddin Devletşah, and he was the son of Devletşah-oğlı Melik Nasruddin Bahtiyar Beg, the pre-Ottoman ruler of Ankara.[96] Kara Devletşah started out his career on the side of Hacı Şadgeldi Paşa and Devatdar Ahmed Paşa, but then went over to Kadı Burhaneddin. Aziz Astarabadi's *Bazm u Razm*, the main chronicle of Kadı Burhaneddin's reign, states that Burhaneddin appointed Devletşah governor of the town of Turhal situated between Amasya and Tokat.[97]

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[95] OA, 47b–48a; Mz, 100.

[96] Amasyalı ʿAbdīzāde Ḥüseyin Ḥüsāmeddīn [Yaşar], *Amasya Tārīḫi*, v. 3 (Istanbul, 1327/1909–1910), 163–167.

[97] ʿAzīz b. Ardaşīr Astarābādī, *Bazm u Razm* (Istanbul, 1928): 374–379.

In other words, Devletşah's authority in the area could be traced back to Kadı Burhaneddin, the Ottomans' recent adversary in Rum. In order to understand the Kara Devletşah incident, it is therefore important to bear in mind the historical background. As we have seen, Amasya had been given to the Ottomans by its *emir*, who had been unable to defend it against a siege by Kadı Burhaneddin. In view of this fact, and of the fact that Yıldırım had made Amasya a provincial capital by installing his son Mehmed there, the town's citizens could be expected to show a certain loyalty to the Ottomans after 1402, especially against a rival who had served under Kadı Burhaneddin.

That is indeed what they appear to have done. The *Ahval* relates that Mehmed confronted Kara Devletşah in the village of Hakala (*Kağala*) on the outskirts of Amasya, where Devletşah was camped with part of his army.[98] Apparently he had not yet succeeded in occupying the town of Amasya itself. Beyond this information, all that the *Ahval* tells us is that Devletşah was defeated and killed by one of Mehmed's *kul*s. For more detail, we must turn again to Hüseyin Hüsameddin. In the first volume of his work, under the entry "Hakala", he discusses this battle, stating that Mehmed was supported by a local chieftain, Hacı Mehmed Beg. Apparently this man was killed in the battle, for his daughter Ayşe Hatun later built a mosque there to commemorate the event. Hacı Mehmed Beg's descendants were later to hold important offices in the Ottoman state as a token of the Ottoman dynasty's appreciation for the help that he had provided to Mehmed Çelebi in his struggle with Kara Devletşah.[99]

According to Hüsameddin, before Mehmed's battle with Kara Devletşah, another local leader had already resisted Devletşah's assumption of power in Amasya. This was Şeyh Şemseddin Ahmed, the spiritual leader of the Hangah-ı Mas'udi, known locally as the Şeyh Kırık Tekkesi. The Hangah-ı Mas'udi was an old and important dervish lodge in Amasya with a history of political involvement. One of its leaders had been none other than the famous Baba İlyas of Khorasan, the spiritual father of the enigmatic Babai revolt (1240).[100] According

[98] OA, 47b–49b; Mz, 100–102.

[99] Hüseyin Hüsameddin, *Amasya Tarihi*, 1: 343. Volume 1 of *Amasya Tarihi* has also been republished in modern Turkish by the municipality of Amasya. See Hüseyin Hüsameddin Yaşar, *Amasya Tarihi*, ed. Ali Yılmaz and Mehmet Akkuş (Ankara, 1986), 281–282.

[100] Hüseyin Hüsameddin, *Amasya Tarihi*, 1: 235 (new edition: 190). For the Babai revolt, see above note 72.

to Hüsameddin, Şemseddin Ahmed's act of resistance placed his life in danger by causing Timur to send his son Kara Sultan Muhammad to Amasya. In the end, the *şeyh* was forced to make a hasty escape to Aleppo.[101] There is no trace of these events in the *Ahval*, and it is unclear where Hüsameddin gets his information about Kara Sultan Muhammad's visit. If such a visit did take place, it may have been during Mehmed's absence. In any case, it would appear that Kara Devletşah was unpopular with at least some important segments of Amasya society, who preferred to support the Ottoman prince Mehmed instead.

After defeating Kara Devletşah, Mehmed's control over his main base of Amasya was assured. However, he still had to establish his authority over the larger region, which was under the control of various tribal and local leaders. This process is described in the next six chapters of the *Ahval*, and seems to have amounted to the creation of a sort of tribal confederacy. Joseph Fletcher, the pioneering historian of Inner Asia, has described such processes as follows:

> Unlike succession struggles in agrarian societies, which usually left most of the population to plant and harvest without being directly involved, nomadic succession struggles tended to involve everybody… Tribal chiefs had to decide which candidate to support, but everybody stood to win by his tribe's making the right choice or to lose by its making the wrong one… The relationship between the tribe and the grand khan largely determined allocations of booty, pasture, power, and honor. Because the khan might fall sick and die or be killed at any time, the political status quo, being suspended from his person, was inherently ready to collapse. So the nomads had always to be sniffing the political breezes and to be ready to choose, form coalitions, and, at every level of society, to act. When, as most commonly happened, agreement or murder or localized skirmishes resolved the succession without an all-out war, the potentialities were nevertheless the same and still concerned everyone directly.[102]

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[101] Hüseyin Hüsameddin, *Amasya Tarihi*, 1: 237 (new edition: 191). As usual, it is not clear where the author has gotten his information, especially about the visit of the Timurid prince Muhammad.

[102] Joseph Fletcher, "Turco-Mongolian Monarchic Tradition in the Ottoman Empire," *Eucharisterion: Essays presented to Omeljan Pritsak on his Sixtieth Birthday by his Colleagues and Students*, *Harvard Ukrainian Studies*, 3–4 (1979–1980), part 1: 240–241. For the creation of Inner Asian tribal confederacies in this period, see also Rudi Lindner, "What Was a Nomadic Tribe?," *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 24:4 (Oct. 1982): 689–711; Woods, *The Aqquyunlu*; Manz, *The Rise and Rule of Tamerlane*.

This is an accurate description of what seems to have happened in Rum after the Battle of Ankara. After Timur's defeat and capture of Yıldırım Bayezid, the province, like the rest of Anatolia, was nominally under Timur's rule. But in reality it was up for grabs, since it was unclear who (if anyone) would become supreme ruler there. Under those circumstances, the leaders of the local tribes acted autonomously, trying to enlarge their territory and create tribal confederacies of their own. Before Mehmed could control the province and its population, he had first to show his power to the clans and their chieftains by defeating them in a series of small-scale military operations, thereby winning their loyalty and bringing them under his own control. Let us take a closer look at these skirmishes, which are described in detail in the *Ahval*.

The first of Mehmed's Turcoman adversaries mentioned in the *Ahval* is Kubad-oğlı. As we have seen, the *beg* of Canik Kubad-oğlı Cüneyd had been the ruler of "Muslim" Samsun until the spring of 1398, when the town was taken by the Ottomans. After this event, Kubad-oğlı had been allowed to remain in the area as an Ottoman vassal controlling Ladik and some other fortresses. The *Ahval* is probably referring to the same man, whose claims in the area must have been revived after the Ottoman defeat at Ankara.[103] According to our source, Kubad-oğlı besieged Niksar, but was defeated by Mehmed and took refuge with another local lord, the leader of the Turcoman tribe of the Taşan-oğulları based in the Merzifon region.[104] Apparently the two were allies. Mehmed then besieged a castle in the Canik region loyal to Taşan-oğlı by the name of *Felenbol* (OA) or *Filtūl* (Mz). Although the *Ahval* describes this siege in great detail, stating that it resulted in the death of the castle's commander and most of its inhabitants, it has not been possible to locate the castle in question, and like many events in the first chapters of the *Ahval* the incident remains rather obscure.[105]

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[103] In their edition of the chronicle of Neşri, Faik Reşit Unat and Mehmed A. Köymen identify Kubad-oğlı as "the *emir* of Samsun, Kubad Oğlu Alâeddin Beg." Since the editors do not state where they have obtained their information, I have chosen to follow Uzunçarşılı, who states that the Kubad-oğlı of the *Ahval* is the same man whom Yıldırım Bayezid expelled from Samsun in 1398. In any case, it is likely that he was from the same family or tribe.

[104] Unat and Köymen identify Taşan-oğlı as "the *emir* of Köprü Taşan-oğlı Ali Beg." See Unat and Köymen, *Kitâb-i Cihan-nümâ*, 1: 379. The mountain south of Vezirköprü is still named Tavşan Dağı, perhaps after this tribe.

[105] OA, 50b–53a; Mz, 102–104.

After the siege and capture of Felenbol, the *Ahval* describes Mehmed's struggles with three more Turcoman leaders: İnal-oğlı, Gözler-oğlı, and Köpek-oğlı.[106] The most serious challenge seems to have been posed by İnal-oğlı, who had a large band of Turcoman fighters on his side (the *Ahval* speaks of between ten and twenty thousand men). Camped in the plain of Kazabad, İnal-oğlı was plundering the surrounding area and provoking Mehmed Çelebi to confront him militarily "so that he can either obtain a yearly tribute or force him out of the land and take it over for himself."[107] After an exchange of insulting letters and embassies, the two sides fought a battle in Kazabad at which İnal-oğlı was defeated.

After defeating İnal-oğlı, Mehmed faced Gözler-oğlı in Karahisar (Şebinkarahisar) and Köpek-oğlı in an unspecified place.[108] The *Ahval* does not present these skirmishes as ending with the death of Mehmed's adversary, but rather with his escape. In the words of Halil İnalcık, these confrontations "evidently resulted in compromises giving recognition of Mehmed's overlordship in return for his confirmation of the begs' freehold possession of their lands." İnalcık points out that these "mülk timars" would later create problems for the Ottoman central government in the area.[109] Be that as it may, for our purposes it is important to emphasize again at this point that Mehmed Çelebi's victories over his local Turcoman adversaries meant that he could count on their support in his battles against his brothers. The loyalty of these vassals is a recurring theme in the *Ahval*.[110]

The process of gaining the obedience of a former adversary is nowhere more clear than in the case of Mezid, the son-in-law of Kadı Burhaneddin. The *Ahval* calls this man simply "a bandit" (*bir ḥarāmī*) to diminish his importance, and the fact that the whole affair is related as a wild adventure story with Mehmed's vizier Bayezid Paşa as its hero

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[106] OA, 53a–59b; Mz, 104–109. Unat and Köymen identify these leaders as İnal-oğlı İbrahim Beg of the Tokat region, Gözler-oğlı Ali Beg of the Ladık region, and Köpek-oğlı Hüseyin Beg of Artuk Ovası. Unfortunately, they do not provide a source for their claims. See Unat and Köymen, *Kitâb-i Cihan-nümâ*, 1: 387, 395, 401.

[107] OA 53b; Mz 105.

[108] Around this time Köpek-oğlı was also attacked by Timur's *emir*s Mirza Sultan Husayn and İskandar. See Alexandrescu-Dersca, *La Campagne*, 85.

[109] İnalcık, "Meḥemmed I," 974.

[110] See chapter 3 below, where Mehmed's Tatar vassal Toyran Beg betrays him, and chapter 4 where Mehmed fights his brother Musa with an army composed largely of Turcoman and Tatar vassals, including his brother in law, the prince of Dulkadır.

could easily obscure the political significance of what was obviously an important event.[111] According to our source, "the bandit" Mezid had been using a mosque in the important town of Sivas as his lair to raid the town's surroundings. When Mehmed heard this, he ordered his vizier Bayezid Paşa to catch Mezid alive and bring him to Tokat. Mezid resisted arrest by climbing the mosque's minaret and had to be smoked out by Bayezid Paşa's men, but was still pardoned by Mehmed to become his faithful servant. Even the most merciful of monarchs would not have treated a mere bandit in this way: instead, it is clear that something more than mere police work was at stake in the capture and pardoning of Mezid.

After describing at length Mehmed Çelebi's local struggles to gain control of Rum in the aftermath of Ankara, the *Ahval* follows its protagonist as he turns his attention again to larger affairs. According to our source, by the time Mehmed had finished asserting his authority over Rum, Timur had moved to his winter camp in Aydın where he heard of Mehmed's successes and invited him to come in person to his court. In its usual epic style, the *Ahval* exaggerates Mehmed's importance, presenting him as so powerful that Timur himself feared he would not let him through on his way out of Anatolia. Exaggerated as this may seem, there is probably a kernel of truth in the *Ahval*'s story. Timur must have heard of Mehmed's victory against Kara Devletşah and his subjugation of Rum, and it was natural that he should want to call the Ottoman prince to account in order to either punish him or recognize him as his vassal. In this light, Timur's summons to Mehmed can be explained as part of his plan to redistribute Anatolia to vassals before returning to Central Asia.

Timur probably sent his embassy to Mehmed in January or February of 1403 at the latest, for by February he had already left the Aegean coast and was heading east.[112] The *Ahval* states that on his way to the meeting with Timur, Mehmed crossed once more through the territory of İsfendiyar, where he was again attacked by İsfendiyar's nephew Kara Yahya. He was also confronted near Ankara by a "Tatar lord" (*Tatar begi*) by the name of Savcı-oğlı Ali, who, as we have seen, may well have

[111] OA, 59b–61a; Mz, 109–111. For Mezid's identification as the son-in-law of Kadı Burhaneddin, see Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Tarihi*, 1: 330.

[112] According to Yazdi, Timur conquered the castle of Uluborlu in Receb 805, i.e. between 25 January and 23 February 1403. See Alexandrescu-Dersca, *La Campagne*, 93–94.

been the son of the Ottoman prince by the same name.[113] According to the *Ahval*, after these confrontations, Mehmed suspected foul play and was dissuaded from visiting Timur's court, taking refuge instead in the mountains.[114] The outcome of these events was that when Yıldırım Bayezid died and Timur finally left Anatolia, Mehmed was not far from Bursa and the domains of his brother İsa. A struggle for the Ottoman throne was imminent.

[113] The fact that Savcı-oğlı Ali is called a "Tatar lord" could simply mean that he was on the side of Timur.

[114] OA 61a–65b; Mz 111–114.

CHAPTER TWO

ANATOLIA BETWEEN İSA AND MEHMED ÇELEBİ (SPRING 1403 – SEPTEMBER 1403)

As Timur's armies were withdrawing from Anatolia, İsa appeared at first to be the prince best poised for success there in the ensuing struggles for the Ottoman throne. Unlike his brother Mehmed, whose power base was in the peripheral and only recently Ottoman province of Rum, by November of 1402 İsa was making claims over his family's original heartland of Bithynia, and may have already controlled Bursa. As we saw in the last chapter, after Timur's armies sacked Bursa in early August, Timur assigned the city to an Ottoman protégé of his, the son of Bayezid I's brother Savcı. It is not known exactly how İsa was able to take power from this son of Savcı, but the records of the Genoese colony of Pera make it clear that by January 1403, İsa was viewed as the dominant Ottoman ruler in Anatolia (*dominans in Turchia*).[1]

İsa's rule in Bursa was not long. The records of Pera inform us that by 18 May of the same year, his brother Mehmed Çelebi had replaced him as ruler of Bursa.[2] The decisive event for this power change was the Battle of Ulubad, which should be dated sometime between 9 March (the death of Yıldırım Bayezid) and 18 May 1403.[3] Mehmed owed his victory largely to an alliance with the ruler of the *beylik* of Germiyan Yakub II. After his defeat at Ulubad, İsa took refuge in Constantinople with the Byzantine Emperor John VII. But by 18 May 1403, he had returned to Anatolia through the intercession of his brother Emir Süleyman, who had a treaty with Byzantium. Emir Süleyman was supporting İsa's claims over Bursa in an effort to weaken his two broth-

[1] Iorga, *Notes et Extraits (ROL)*, 85.

[2] Iorga, *Notes et Extraits (ROL)*, 85. Zachariadou (Süleyman Çelebi, 284–285) has erroneously read "die … Madii" as March rather than May. It is clear from p. 80 of Iorga's edition that entries made in March appear as "die … Marcii," and *madius* is a common medieval form of the classical *maius*; see Du Cange *et al.*, ed., *Glossarium Mediæ et Infimæ Latinitatis* (Paris: Librairie des sciences et des arts, 1937–1938). May also fits the description of the *Ahval* much better (see below).

[3] As we will see below, the account of the *Ahval* makes it clear that the battle should be dated not long after the death of Yıldırım Bayezid (9 March 1403).

ers in Anatolia by pitting them against each other, thus preparing the ground for his own operations on the Asian side of the straits.

Meanwhile, during İsa's absence, Mehmed had taken advantage of his victory to present himself as heir to Yıldırım Bayezid's legacy in Anatolia. Entering Bursa, a city of crucial political importance, Mehmed held enthronement ceremonies and funeral services there for his father, further proclaiming his rule over the area by striking a coin on which his name appears alongside that of Timur. But İsa soon returned to Anatolia, and the region was plunged once again into civil war. Probably with an army provided by Süleyman, İsa first occupied the province of Karasi, then took the northwestern Anatolian towns of Beypazarı and Sivrihisar. After carrying out a military operation against Karaman, he descended on Bursa. But the city remained loyal to Mehmed, and İsa was forced to besiege and burn it. This led to another confrontation between the two brothers, which was again won by Mehmed. Following his second defeat, İsa made an alliance with İsfendiyar of Kastamonu, whose armies he used to attack Ankara and confront Mehmed for a third time near Gerede. Once again, İsa was defeated, and formed yet another alliance against his brother, this time with Cüneyd and the *beylik*s of western Anatolia. But in the meantime, Mehmed had formed alliances of his own with the *beylik* of Karaman and the tribal confederacy of Dulkadır, which was rich in horses and horsemen. Mehmed's important alliance with Dulkadır was cemented by his marriage to a Dulkadırid princess. Probably with the assistance of his new allies, Mehmed was able to defeat İsa and Cüneyd—according to several Ottoman chronicles, İsa fled to Karaman but was unable to stay there, and was eventually caught and strangled in Eskişehir. While the details and chronology of İsa's battles with Mehmed are somewhat unclear, it appears that by September of 1403 İsa was dead and Mehmed was once again in control of Bursa and Ottoman Anatolia. But Mehmed's supremacy did not last long. By March 1404, his powerful brother Emir Süleyman had crossed the straits and occupied Bursa.

The *Ahval* provides an extensive and lively account of Mehmed's struggles with İsa. Unfortunately, the dearth of other sources makes it difficult to corroborate its account, which presents certain problems of chronology. The *Ahval* creates the impression that Mehmed's last three battles with İsa took place in 1404, while in fact it is clear from Clavijo and a document issued by Süleyman in March of 1404 that by that time, Süleyman had already crossed the straits and taken

Bursa, and İsa was probably dead. While those sources support the idea that the *Ahval*'s chronology was distorted to serve narrative and political goals, it is nevertheless difficult to explain how the three battles between Mehmed and İsa could have all taken place in the space of a single summer (1403). Such problems notwithstanding, however, the *Ahval*'s account remains our richest source on the battles between Mehmed and İsa. Furthermore, close analysis shows that other sources like Clavijo pose problems of their own. This is obvious from Elizabeth Zachariadou's treatment of İsa in her article on Süleyman Çelebi, in which she privileges non-Ottoman sources and fails to assign to the *Ahval* the importance that it deserves, making the section on İsa the only weak point in an otherwise excellent article. As was already discussed in the introduction, Zachariadou reached the conclusion that İsa was ousted from Bursa not by Mehmed Çelebi but by Emir Süleyman, following an unsuccessful attempt on the part of İsa and Süleyman to attack Timur's army as it was withdrawing from Anatolia.[4] This version of events is implausible, although it is not difficult to understand how Zachariadou arrived at it, since as we will see below the sources are rather confusing.[5] Now let us turn to a more detailed examination of the power struggle between İsa and Mehmed Çelebi.

The Buildup to Ulubad: Mehmed Çelebi's Alliance with Germiyan

Before discussing the Battle of Ulubad itself, it is first necessary to examine Mehmed Çelebi's activities leading up to that battle. The *Ahval* creates the impression that the confrontation between Mehmed and İsa developed naturally out of Mehmed's aborted visit to Timur and the events following Yıldırım Bayezid's death and Timur's departure from Anatolia. As we saw in the previous chapter, after Mehmed established himself as the ruler of Rum by defeating Timur's appointee Kara Devletşah and gaining the allegiance of the local tribal leaders, Timur received news of the Ottoman prince's successes and invited him to present himself at his court.[6] The *Ahval* provides detailed infor-

[4] Zachariadou, "Süleyman Çelebi," 285–287.

[5] Since writing her article, Zachariadou's views on İsa have changed (personal communication, December 2000). Needless to say, Zachariadou should still be given credit for identifying the sources in question, which as she points out are strictly contemporary and therefore of great value.

[6] The *Ahval*'s assertions that Timur was so impressed by Mehmed's successes that

mation on Mehmed's correspondence with Timur, stating that Timur dispatched a scholar named Hoca Mehmed with a letter of invitation. The Ottoman prince accepted this invitation despite the admonitions of his viziers, who believed that such a visit was far too risky. He set out with his men from Tokat heading west, making stops in Amasya and Osmancık. Apparently Mehmed had with him a substantial military retinue, for as we will see in a moment, he was able to win several skirmishes along the way without returning to Rum to replenish his troops.

According to our source, when Mehmed and his army had reached the river Devres near Tosya, they entered the territory of İsfendiyar and were attacked for the second time by İsfendiyar's nephew Kara Yahya, who was this time accompanied by a certain Abdullah. Kara Yahya was defeated and fled, while Mehmed continued his journey through the realm of İsfendiyar, camping in the plain of Mürted-ova (*Mürtāẕ-ābād*) northwest of Ankara.[7] While camped in Mürted-ova, Mehmed's party attracted the attention of "one of the Tatar begs named Ali Beg, who was also known as the son of Savcı."[8] As has already been suggested, this man may have been the Ottoman son of Savcı, Timur's first appointee to Bursa, who appears later in the civil war in Rumeli as a rival of Musa Çelebi. If this is the case, the fact that the chronicle calls him a "Tatar beg" should be interpreted as meaning simply that he was on the side of Timur. As we have seen, the term "Tatar" in Ottoman chronicles is vague, and does not necessarily imply Mongol descent. Most importantly, if Savcı-oğlı was indeed an Ottoman contender for the throne, the *Ahval* would have had good reason to downplay his claim to legitimacy by disguising his true identity. We have already witnessed such attempts at delegitimation in the cases of Kara Devletşah and Mezid Beg, and we saw in the introduction that Murad II later presented his uncle "Düzme" Mustafa as an impostor.[9]

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he promised to release his father Bayezid from captivity and make Mehmed his son-in-law seem like exaggerations, but it is clear that some sort of embassy from Timur did indeed reach Mehmed in Tokat.

[7] OA, 63a; Mz, 112. For the location of Mürted-ova see Donald Edgar Pitcher, *An Historical Geography of the Ottoman Empire from Earliest Times to the End of the Sixteenth Century* (Leiden: Brill, 1972), map xxv.

[8] OA, 63b; Mz, 112.

[9] Mustafa's (second) challenge took place early in the reign of Murad II. According

Returning now to our account, when Savcı-oğlı Ali Beg became aware of Mehmed's presence, he sent a man by the name of Ahi Mustafa as an ambassador in order to size up Mehmed's army and attack him. But Mehmed uncovered the plot and attacked Savcı-oğlı first, chasing him and his army into the fortress of Ankara (*Selāsil*) which was apparently serving as their base. After the Savcı-oğlı incident, we are told that Mehmed changed his mind about visiting Timur because he became convinced that his intentions were hostile, and decided instead to head for Bolu, avoiding the usual road and following a mountainous route.[10] Once he was safely hidden in the mountains, Mehmed Çelebi sent Timur's ambassador Hoca Mehmed back to him along with an ambassador of his own, one of his tutors (*bir ḫōcası*) named Sufi Bayezid. As is often the case in the *Ahval*, the mention of a proper name is a strong indication that we are dealing here with a real historical event. While it is often impossible to identify minor characters in the *Ahval*, in this case, there is a man who fits the description: in Amasya there is a tomb of a Sufi Bayezid who died in February 1412.[11]

According to our source, Sufi Bayezid was given a letter addressed to Timur in which Mehmed apologized for the cancellation of his visit, explaining the difficulties that he had encountered along the way because of the attacks of Kara Yahya and Savcı-oğlı Ali Beg.[12] When Sufi Bayezid reached Timur's court, he delivered Mehmed's letter which was well received. Timur told the ambassador of the recent death of Yıldırım Bayezid (9 March 1403) and had his chancery compose a letter to Mehmed informing him of the event. This letter was delivered to Mehmed Çelebi by another messenger, since Timur did not allow Sufi Bayezid to return but retained him for his own court. This is in keeping with Timur's well-known custom of gathering scholars from the places where he campaigned for his court in Samarkand. However, the fact that Sufi Bayezid was buried in Amasya (if this is

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to Halil İnalcık, "Prince Murad's supporters spread the rumor that Muṣṭafā had died and that the challenger was a false (*düzme*) Muṣṭafā." See İnalcık, "Meḥemmed I," 976.

[10] OA, 63b–64a; Mz, 112–113.

[11] See Ekrem Hakkı Ayverdi, *Osmanlı Mi'mârîsinde Çelebi ve II. Murad Devri, 806–855 (1403–1451)* (Istanbul: Baha Matbaası, 1972), 36.

[12] This part of the *Ahval*'s account is quite plausible: the Castilian ambassador Clavijo has left us a detailed account of his embassy to Timur in Samarkand, in which it is clear that as the embassy approached Central Asia, they were met repeatedly by Timur's men, who fed them and made sure that they arrived safely. See Clavijo, ed. Estrada, 117ff. If Timur had really intended to receive Mehmed favorably, he surely would have had the power to protect him from attack along the way.

indeed the same man) suggests that he must somehow have escaped captivity and returned there, perhaps after Timur's death in 1405.

When Mehmed Çelebi received Timur's letter and learned of his father's passing, he mourned for a few days, then continued his journey through the mountains until he reached a place called Aruş. While Mehmed was in Aruş, the *Ahval* rather casually relates that he received a visit from Yakub II, the ruler of the nearby *beylik* of Germiyan. According to our source, Yakub informed Mehmed that before departing from Anatolia, Timur had left the body of Yıldırım Bayezid along with the young prince Musa Çelebi in Yakub's care in Akşehir, instructing him to deliver them to Mehmed "since that was the will of Yıldırım."[13] This part of the *Ahval*'s account appears somewhat suspicious. When Yıldırım Bayezid died, İsa was still in control of Bursa; so even if Timur had been acting on Bayezid's instructions, the natural thing would have been to deliver the body for burial to İsa rather than Mehmed. In fact, Timur appears to have chosen a third option: according to the chronicler Yazdi, when Yıldırım Bayezid died in Akşehir, Timur left his remains temporarily in a local cemetery in the care of his young son Musa Çelebi, with instructions that the late Ottoman Sultan should be buried in Bursa in the pious foundation (*imāret*) that he himself had constructed. In order to accomplish this task, Yazdi states that Musa was given a *yarlġ* for Bursa stamped with Timur's seal (*al tamġa*), accompanied by gifts and symbols of royal authority: a robe of honor, a belt, a sword, and one hundred fine horses.[14] This would suggest that during his stay in Anatolia, Timur appointed no fewer than three Ottoman princes to rule over Bursa! His policy is obvious: by granting a *yarlġ* to each of the princes, he intended to divide the Ottoman dynasty and prevent the emergence of another Bayezid.

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[13] OA, 64a–65b; Mz, 113–114. Aruş can perhaps be identified with the modern village of Uruş northeast of Beypazarı. Another possibility is Araş (mod. Araç) in the mountains west of Kastamonu, but it seems unlikely that Mehmed would go so far into İsfendiyar's territory. Uruş seems like a better choice, since as we will see the chronicle claims that after Aruş, Mehmed passed over a high mountain and descended into the town of Mudurnu. If Aruş is indeed the modern Uruş, then the mountain in question would be Karlık Dağı.

[14] Yazdi, 350. See also Doukas 18:7, who presents Yıldırım Bayezid on his deathbed begging Timur to let his body be buried in the tomb in Bursa that he himself had built. Doukas states that Timur granted Bayezid's request, and that he "sent the remains with a hundred slaves who served as pallbearers, emancipating them at the same time, who took him to Prusa and buried him in the tomb that he himself had built."

Unlike his brothers, in 1403 Musa was still a minor and would therefore have needed a regent in order to rule Bursa. It would appear from the *Ahval*'s account that Musa's first guardian after Timur was Yakub of Germiyan. During his stay in Anatolia Timur had been very close to Yakub, in whose court in Kütahya he had spent a considerable amount of time. The choice was therefore a natural one. Needless to say, Timur's decision to leave the remains of Yıldırım Bayezid along with Musa in Yakub's custody gave the ruler of Germiyan a great deal of power. Musa's *yarlıġ* for Bursa was recent, superceding the earlier one that Timur had granted to İsa. The document could therefore be used by those acting on behalf of Musa to justify expelling İsa from the city. With Musa in his custody, Yakub could have ruled Bursa himself as Musa's guardian (*atabeg*), a well-known means of seizing power in medieval Islamic political tradition. But it is unlikely that the inhabitants of Bursa would have accepted a non-Ottoman ruler. Instead, Yakub chose to make an alliance with Mehmed Çelebi. It is not difficult to discern the motives behind the Germiyanid ruler's choice: in the spring of 1403, both Emir Süleyman and İsa were relatively strong, and had not yet begun to compete for the Ottoman throne since they were based on opposite sides of the straits. To the ruler of Germiyan, whose territory bordered on Ottoman Bithynia, İsa was probably perceived as the Ottoman prince who posed the most immediate danger of reviving Yıldırım Bayezid's imperial project in Anatolia. In that context, it made sense for Yakub to ally himself with a third Ottoman prince who was competing for the same territory, but whose weak position made him appear relatively harmless. In the early spring of 1403, that prince was Mehmed Çelebi.

The existence of an alliance between Yakub of Germiyan and Mehmed Çelebi has been proven beyond doubt by Şinasi Tekin's discovery of a letter of oath (*sevgendnāme*) sent by Mehmed Çelebi to Yakub of Germiyan. This letter has survived thanks to the fact that it was copied into a chancery manual in 1427–1428, which in turn was incorporated into a later manual from the reign of Mehmed the Conqueror (1451–1481).[15] That a document so unflattering to the Ottoman dynasty was preserved unaltered, complete with the name of the future Sultan Mehmed I, can be attributed to the fact that the author of the original manual was from Germiyan, in whose archives the document itself

[15] See the *Sevgendnāme* in Şinasi Tekin, "Fatih Sultan Mehmed Devrine Âit bir İnşâ Mecmuası," 267–311.

must have been kept. As Tekin points out, we are most fortunate to have an unaltered copy of this letter. The same document has also survived in another version in an Ottoman chancery manual dated 1473, in which the names of Bayezid and Mehmed have been deleted.[16]

While Mehmed Çelebi's *sevgendnāme* is not dated, it is obvious from its content that it was written in the immediate aftermath of Ankara, when the Ottoman prince was still very weak. Mehmed's disadvantageous position is apparent in the following passage, which forms the core (*dispositio*) of the document:

> I, Mehmed son of Bayezid Beg, having purified myself completely and placed my hand upon the sacred Quran, do sincerely swear for the sake of God, who is the knower of the divine secrets: In the name of God … I have taken a binding oath, and sworn without treachery or exception, that from this day on I will be a friend and ally of Yakub Beg son of Süleymanşah, and will cease all dealings with the other begs. Both openly and in secret, I will be a friend to his friends and an enemy to his enemies. So long as my soul is in my body, for a period of thirty years, I will not transgress this agreement and decision, and will steadfastly follow this oath and treaty. I will not seek to alter the content of this binding oath and pact, by any means or trick or interpretation, in accordance with the words and seductions of any person. I will not back out of this oath of mine. And if I should back out, let the Word of God hold me accountable.[17]

As Tekin has pointed out in his commentary, the fact that in the above text the Ottoman prince calls himself simply "Mehmed the son of Bayezid Beg" (*ben ki Bāyezīd Beg-oġlı Meḥemmedven*) and avoids using lofty titles either for himself or for his father proves that the document can safely be dated to the immediate aftermath of the Battle of Ankara. As we will see, after the Battle of Ulubad when Mehmed succeeded in taking Bursa from İsa he was no longer so humble.

Given the fact that Mehmed Çelebi's alliance with Yakub of Germiyan was concluded from a position of weakness, it is not surprising that the *Ahval* would hide the true nature of the alliance. As we have seen, our source presents Yakub's willingness to deliver the remains of Yıldırım Bayezid along with Musa Çelebi to Mehmed simply as the will of the deceased Ottoman sultan, as reflected in Timur's orders.

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[16] Tekin, "Fatih Sultan Mehmed Devrine Âit bir İnşâ Mecmuası," 296.

[17] Kastritsis, "Çelebi Meḥemmed's Letter of Oath (*Sevgendnāme*) to Ya'ḳūb II of Germiyan: Notes and a Translation Based on Şinasi Tekin's Edition," 444; Tekin, "Fatih Sultan Mehmed Devrine Âit bir İnşâ Mecmuası," 297.

But our source also makes it very clear that Yakub of Germiyan was instrumental to Mehmed's decision to contest his brother İsa's possession of Bursa, as well as to his eventual victory at Ulubad. In order not to betray its protagonist's weak position, the *Ahval* presents Yakub's decision to help Mehmed as motivated by a sense of duty toward the deceased Yıldırım Bayezid. As we will see, the *Ahval* presents in a similar manner the role of other non-Ottoman powers that played an instrumental role in the civil war, such as İsfendiyar of Kastamonu, Cüneyd of İzmir, Mircea of Wallachia, and the Byzantine Emperors John VII and Manuel II Palaiologos.

The *Ahval* states that "when Timur Khan left and reached Erzincan … Emir Yakub came to [Mehmed Çelebi at Aruş] to pay his condolences, and kissed his hand. For a while they mourned together for the late ruler." After this meeting the two rulers remained together, and on the march to Bursa "being a brave man, Emir Yakub led the army."[18] Our source's claim that Yakub led the army comes as no surprise, since most of it was probably his! After crossing a high mountain (probably Karlık Dağı north of Beypazarı) and stopping in Mudurnu, Mehmed and Yakub were very near Bursa. But they were unable to reach their destination, for in the meantime İsa had learned of their arrival and blocked the pass of Ermeni Derbendi leading to Bursa via İnegöl.[19] Faced with this obstacle, Yakub and Mehmed tried another route via Domaniç, but once again İsa's forces got there before them. There was a skirmish after which Mehmed's army was able to get through. Mehmed's first skirmishes with İsa must have made it clear that the conquest of Bursa was not going to be as easy as he and his allies had hoped. The *Ahval* relates that after breaking through İsa's forces at Domaniç, Mehmed told Yakub to take him to Yakub's "maternal uncle" (*dayı*) Eyne Beg Subaşı "who was at that time the military commander (*sübaşı*, *subaşı*) of Balıkesir." Apparently, Eyne Beg was an essen-

[18] OA, 66a; Mz, 114.

[19] This pass, which holds an important place in early Ottoman history, was located just south of Bilecik near the village of Pazarcık or Pazaryeri (formerly Ermeni Pazarcığı). One of the two mountains through which it passed used to be called Ermenek (the other was Domaniç Dağı), and there was a Byzantine castle there called Armenokastron. See Paul Wittek, "Von der Byzantinischen zur Türkischen Toponymie," *Byzantion* 10 (1935): 52; Bilge Umar, *Türkiye'deki Tarihsel Adlar: Türkiye'nin Tarihsel Coğrafyası ve Tarihsel Adları Üzerine Alfabetik Düzende bir İnceleme* (Istanbul: İnkilâp Kitabevi, 1993), 251. The pass is also depicted in Matrakçı Nasuh, *Beyān-i menāzil-i sefer-i 'Irāḳeyn-i Sulṭān Süleymān Ḫān*, ed. Hüseyin G. Yurdaydın (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1976).

tial ally, for our source presents Mehmed as saying to Yakub: "Now you take us to your uncle. Until we get there, rule (*beglik*) cannot be ours."[20]

Eyne Beg Subaşı is a known personage of early Ottoman history, since his name is attested in both the Ottoman and Byzantine chronicle traditions.[21] His career in Ottoman service began during the reign of Murad I. As we have seen, according to Aşıkpaşazade and the *Ottoman Anonymous Chronicles*, Eyne Beg was also one of the magnates who had accompanied Emir Süleyman from the battlefield at Ankara to Rumeli. Furthermore, Süleyman's retinue at that time included İsa, and we will see below that there is a strong likelihood the two brothers were in fact allies. Perhaps that is how Eyne Beg ended up in Balıkesir, a town he was presumably ruling in the name of İsa. However, the *Ahval* suggests that Eyne Beg's loyalty to İsa and Süleyman was not great enough to prevent him from changing sides and joining Mehmed. It would seem that the person who swayed him was Yakub of Germiyan, with whom according to our source he was either related by blood or otherwise very close. When discussing the making and breaking of alliances before the Battle of Ulubad, it is also important to bear in mind that these events were taking place immediately after Timur's departure from Anatolia. While Timur was still present, it would have been difficult for local rulers to make alliances and act independently, since Timur might interpret such independent action as a challenge to the *status quo* that he had created in Anatolia. Seen in this light, Mehmed's alliance with Yakub and Eyne Beg was an important development, since it represented a change in that *status quo*.

According to the *Ahval*, Mehmed left Balıkesir in the company of his allies Yakub and Eyne Beg Subaşı, who apparently contributed troops

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[20] OA, 66b; Mz 114: *Şimden girü bizi ṭayıña ilet. Biz anda varmayınca beglik ele girmez.*

[21] Eyne Beg was in the army of Ottoman sultan Murad I at the Battle of Kosovo (1389). See Akdes Nimet (Kurat), *Die türkische Prosopographie bei Laonikos Chalkokandyles*, 41–42. The Byzantine chronicler Chalkokondyles states that he took part in Bayezid's war council before the Battle of Ankara and advised him to distribute his treasure to his soldiers. This story is reminiscent of the *Ottoman Anonymous Chronicles*, which vilify Bayezid and his grand vizier Çandarlı Ali Paşa for amassing treasure and trying to build a centralized state from the acquisitions of the gazis. The existence of such a story connected with the name of Eyne Beg Subaşı suggests that he might have been viewed as a champion of the *gazi*s and the "good old days" before centralization. If so, the *Ahval*'s emphasis on his alliance with Mehmed and subsequent death at the hands of İsa would suggest an attempt to associate Mehmed with those same elements. In fact, this is a pervasive tendency in the chronicle: see, for example, the stories about Çandarlı Ali Paşa (chapters 3–4) and Mehmed's generous banquet for his men before the Battle of Çamurlu (chapter 5).

of their own to his army. This army headed in the direction of Bursa and camped outside Ulubad. They were soon joined there by İsa's forces, which camped to their east on the side of Ulubad facing Bursa.[22] The first major battle of the Ottoman civil war was about to begin.

The Battle of Ulubad (9 March – 18 May 1403)

The Battle of Ulubad can be considered as marking the end of the period immediately following the Battle of Ankara, when Timur was still in Anatolia, and the beginning of the Ottoman succession struggles. The *Ahval* is sensitive to this fact, and its anonymous author appears to have made a conscious effort not to present Mehmed as the initiator of the civil war. At a time when the Ottomans were threatened by numerous outside enemies, it was important for political reasons to maintain at least an illusion of unity between the sons of the deceased Sultan Bayezid. While it may seem obvious to us that Mehmed provoked İsa by entering his territory, the *Ahval* presents its hero's actions as being motivated by the simple desire to obtain what was rightfully his, namely a place among his older brothers. As we will see, on all occasions when Mehmed confronted his brothers militarily, the author of the *Ahval* has tried to convey the idea that these confrontations took place against his will. This is a central theme of the present study, and will be discussed at length in its final chapter; however it is worth pausing briefly here to examine how it pertains to the Battle of Ulubad.

We have seen that the *Ahval* makes no effort to hide the fact that after the departure of Timur, Mehmed Çelebi decided to claim the Ottoman capital of Bursa as his own. Our source implies that if Mehmed could succeed in taking Bursa, supremacy (*beglik*) would become his. His claim to the Ottoman throne is justified in the narrative by a variety of means: by presenting Mehmed as so brave and successful that even Timur feared him; by claiming that on his deathbed Yıldırım Bayezid asked Timur to arrange for delivery of his body and of his young son Musa to Mehmed; and finally, by asserting that Yakub of Germiyan submitted to Mehmed's authority, when in fact the power relationship was clearly the other way around. Such narrative devices are meant to create the impression that Mehmed's desire to go to Bursa

[22] OA, 66b; Mz, 115.

and bury his father there was natural, since despite his young age, success in battle had proven that he was the most fit to rule. On the other hand, the *Ahval* provides no explanation of İsa's unwillingness to accept this arrangement except for mere malice on his part. Even though Mehmed's meetings with Yakub and Eyne Beg clearly served military objectives, our source makes them appear as defensive rather than offensive in nature, making us think that Mehmed anticipated resistance from İsa and therefore took precautions. After his visit to Eyne Beg in Balıkesir, we are told that Mehmed simply decided to leave in the direction of Bursa, camping along the way at Ulubad, where İsa came to meet him with hostile intentions.

Before describing the Battle of Ulubad, the *Ahval* relates a fascinating story rich in political implications. When it became clear to Mehmed that İsa's intentions were hostile, he held counsel with his viziers and military commanders on how best to fight the battle:

> Eyne Beg Subaşı advised against battle. Instead, he thought it best that the two brothers should avoid fighting each other, but should make peace on the terms that the Sultan would keep Bursa and that side of the country, while İsa Beg could have the rest, namely Aydın, Saruhan, Germiyan, and Karasi, along with the province of Karaman. Having agreed on that matter, they wrote a letter to İsa Beg and sent an ambassador … [İsa] answered: "Now I am the older brother. The throne is in my hands. He is just a young boy, why does he need to rule? Let him prepare himself, for it is obvious that I will drive him out of this land" … The Sultan turned to Eyne Beg Subaşı, and said to him: "It is inevitable that we must fight with this man. At least now the fault will not have been ours."[23]

Needless to say, from a purely factual point of view this is a highly unlikely scenario. There is no reason why İsa should have accepted such a proposal since there was no precedent in Ottoman history for power sharing through the granting of appanages.[24] Moreover, in order to rule the so-called "provinces" of Aydın, Saruhan, Germiyan, Karasi, and Karaman as appanages, İsa would have first had to expel their ruling dynasties. In the spring of 1403, when Timur had only recently defeated the Ottomans and revived the *beylik*s of Anatolia, such a proposition was still out of the question.

Under the circumstances, then, the two brothers had no other option but to fight. The Battle of Ulubad resulted in a victory for Mehmed.

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[23] OA, 67a–67b; Mz, 115.

[24] See below, chapter 6.

According to the *Ahval*, Eyne Beg was killed in battle and İsa escaped to Constantinople. Furthermore, the Ottoman general Timurtaş, who had fought on İsa's side, was captured by Mehmed's forces after the battle and executed. Our source states that Timurtaş was decapitated, and that his severed head was sent to Emir Süleyman with a letter announcing İsa's defeat. This highly symbolic act suggests that Mehmed perceived his two older brothers İsa and Süleyman as allies, as has already been suggested. We have seen that in the aftermath of Ankara, Bayezid's two oldest sons had established their rule over the core provinces of their father's empire, obtaining recognition of their positions there from Timur as well as such foreign powers as Byzantium, Venice and Genoa. Mehmed and those loyal to him had thus been excluded from the lion's share of Yıldırım Bayezid's legacy. By defeating İsa and sending Timurtaş' head to Süleyman, Mehmed was effectively announcing his own bid for power (*ḫurūc*) to all concerned.[25] As for the unlucky means of this announcement, the Ottoman general Timurtaş, as discussed in the last chapter an eyewitness writing in September 1402 reported that he had seen the general with Emir Süleyman in Gallipoli after the Battle of Ankara.[26] Unlike Eyne Beg, who had also been with Süleyman at Gallipoli but had later switched sides, Timurtaş had remained loyal to his original allegiances, paying for his loyalty with his life.

The chronicle of Doukas corroborates the *Ahval*'s story, albeit indirectly. The relevant passage is confusing, and can be translated as follows:

> Of Bayezid's sons who remained in the East, Mehmed was in Ankara of Galatia, because that province had no heir. His brother Musa was also with him, who was a mere boy. The other one, İsa, was wandering about here and there without any authority; the same was true for Mustafa. Since İsa was sojourning at the time in those parts, Mehmed dispatched from Ankara one of his father's nobles, Timurtaş by name, who engaged him in battle and cut off his head. Mehmed thus strengthened his position throughout Galatia.[27]

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[25] For the meaning of the term *ḫurūc* see Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds*, 118–119.

[26] See the letter of Tommaso da Molino dated 24 September 1402 in Alexandrescu-Dersca, *La campagne*, 139. According to this source, Süleyman arrived in Gallipoli in the company of Albasan (Çandarlı Ali Paşa), Lauranese (Evrenos), and Tamar Taspar (Timurtaş).

[27] Doukas 18:4. Magoulias has made two mistakes in his translation of this passage, writing "Mehmed was in Ankara of Galatia because he had no inheritance of province" and "Mehmed was praised throughout Galatia." As Elizabeth Zachariadou has pointed

In fact, this passage is a rather unsuccessful attempt on the part of Doukas to provide an overview of the activity of the Ottoman princes in Anatolia around 1403, with which he was clearly not very familiar. What concerns us here are the obvious echoes of the Battle of Ulubad. As we will see below, after Ulubad, Mehmed Çelebi was indeed able to take possession of Ankara and parts of Galatia and to obtain custody of his young brother Musa Çelebi. As for İsa, after his stay in Constantinople, he indeed returned to Anatolia "wandering about here and there without any authority," where he fought three more battles with Mehmed before he was killed. But the most striking part of Doukas' passage is its last two sentences, which bear an obvious (if distorted) resemblance to the *Ahval*'s account of the decapitation of Timurtaş following Ulubad. The Byzantine chronicler seems to have misunderstood these events: the actors and actions are the same, but their roles have been reversed. Thus Doukas mentions Mehmed, İsa, Timurtaş, and a decapitation, but states that Mehmed sent Timurtaş to decapitate İsa, as opposed to the *Ahval*'s much more credible story, in which the man who loses his head is Timurtaş. In fact, it is extremely improbable that İsa could have been decapitated as Doukas suggests, since contemporary sources suggest that already at the time of the civil war, the preferred method of executing Ottoman princes was strangulation which avoided the shedding of royal blood.[28] Whatever Doukas' sources for these events, he was clearly not well informed about İsa's career, since he appears to ignore the fact that İsa ever controlled Bursa in the first place. Doukas' confusion notwithstanding, his mere mention of Timurtaş in connection with a decapitation lends credibility to the *Ahval*'s account.

Were İsa and Süleyman Allies?

Let us return now to the larger question of İsa's alliance with Emir Süleyman. The fact that İsa took refuge in Constantinople after his defeat at Ulubad suggests that such an alliance may indeed have existed, since we know that Süleyman and Byzantium had a treaty at the time.

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out to me, here *μεγαλυνόμενος* should be translated as "strengthened his position" rather than as "praised."

[28] See, for example, the executions of Emir Süleyman and Musa Çelebi in the *Ahval*: OA, 90a, 101b; Mz, 132, 141.

Further proof is provided by the *Ahval*'s claim that İsa was released at the request of Emir Süleyman and ferried from Gallipoli back to Anatolia. In fact, the *Ahval* states explicitly that Süleyman intentionally pitted his two brothers against each other so that one of them would be eliminated, making it easier for him eventually to take over Anatolia for himself. The relevant passage can be translated as follows:

> When [Emir Süleyman] heard that the Sultan had forced İsa Beg out of his province and had let him escape to Constantinople, conquering all of Anatolia and Rum and making it his own, this situation made Emir Süleyman very uneasy. He said to his lords: "I desire to cross to Anatolia and conquer that province too. For our brother Mehmed has been bad to İsa, forcing him out of his realm, taking the entire land of Anatolia for himself, and ascending to my father's throne…" The begs and viziers replied: "… the way to deal with this matter is as follows. Let us write and send a letter to the Emperor (*tekvūr*) of Constantinople, telling him to surrender your brother İsa Beg to us. Then we can transfer him to the Sultan's vicinity, so that one of them will be eliminated and only one will remain. When there is only one enemy left, things will be easy…" When the Emperor became familiar with the content of the document and was convinced by Emir Süleyman about various matters, they concluded a treaty and he handed over İsa Beg. İsa Beg came back with the ambassador, crossed the straits at Gelibolu without delay, and seized the entire province of Karasi.[29]

It is worth noting here the mention of the conclusion of a treaty after the Emperor "was convinced by Emir Süleyman about various matters." It is possible to read this as a simple reference to the treaty of 1403, which had been signed a few months earlier by Süleyman and John VII, as we have already seen; if so we are dealing with an anachronism, since at the time of İsa's defeat Süleyman and Byzantium had already had a treaty for several months. But it is also possible that Emir Süleyman made new promises to Byzantium after Ulubad, since the possession of İsa gave the Byzantines a new advantage.

In reconstructing the circumstances surrounding the Battle of Ulubad, so far we have relied mostly on the chronicle of Doukas and the *Ahval*. However, we have also seen that there are some other, more fragmentary reports on the career of İsa, which were first introduced by Elizabeth Zachariadou.[30] While such sources pose problems of their own, as they are often cryptic and based on rumors, they nevertheless

[29] OA, 69b–70b; Mz, 117.
[30] Zachariadou, *Süleyman Çelebi*, 283–291.

have the important advantage of not distorting events to conform to the exigencies of a coherent narrative with a political agenda, such as the *Ahval*. Let us see, then, what these sources can tell us about the Battle of Ulubad and its aftermath. We will begin with Zachariadou's main source, an enigmatic entry from a Byzantine short chronicle. The following is an original translation in which the most difficult passages have been rendered in italics:

> After the unlawful expiration of that impious Payiazet, *the two brothers Esebeis and Kyritzes came together* and a great battle was fought, in which five thousand infidels fell. Esebeis became a fugitive and took refuge in Nicomedeia, but was not accepted by the inhabitants of that town, and took refuge with the most pious and Christian of kings John Palaiologos. Having been brought into Constantinople he fell at the feet of the Roman emperor, thus fulfilling what has been said of the Mother of God, that "she overthrew tyrants from their thrones and elevated the humble, showered the hungry with riches and sent the rich back empty-handed." Then by means of letters Esebeis was sent back to the east *on account of the peace with his brother Kyritzes*. Kyritzes, however, was not willing to fulfill the requirements of the peace, but to this moment is rousing him to a desire for killing. So much for these matters.[31]

The above chronicle repeats several key elements of the *Ahval*'s account of the Battle of Ulubad. One is İsa's defeat and escape from the battlefield; another is his reception into the Byzantine capital by John VII Palaiologos, which suggests that the battle in question took place before Manuel II's return to Constantinople (9 June 1403). The reference to the death of Yıldırım Bayezid makes clear that the battle being described took place after 9 March 1403, which is a strong argument that the short chronicle is referring to the Battle of Ulubad, as its editor Peter Schreiner has suggested.[32] Finally, another interesting element is the information about the inhabitants of Nicomedeia (İzmit) refusing to give refuge to İsa as he fled. While such an event is not mentioned specifically by the *Ahval*, as we will see that source contains similar stories involving İsa after his return to Anatolia. In fact, reports of towns

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[31] Schreiner, *Kleinchroniken*, I: 113–114. In the original Greek, the phrases in italics are as follows: 1) οι δύο ἀδελφοὶ Ἐσέμπεϊς καὶ Κυριτζὴς ἑνώσαντες 2) εἶτα διὰ γραμμάτων σταλεὶς πάλιν ἐν τῇ ἑώα Ἐσέμπεϊς ἕνεκα ἀγάπης τοῦ ἀδελφοῦ αὐτοῦ Κυριτζῆ.

[32] Schreiner, *Kleinchroniken*, II: 377–378. Zachariadou has suggested otherwise, but her interpretation must be seen in the larger context of her theory that İsa was killed by Emir Süleyman after an unsuccessful attack on Timur. See above, note 5.

torn between the rival princes of the civil war are common in both the Ottoman and non-Ottoman sources of the period.[33]

Let us turn now to the two difficult passages in the short chronicle, rendered above in italics. The first of those speaks of "Esebeis" (i.e. İsa Beg) and a brother called "Kyritzes" "coming together" (ἑνώσαντες). Obviously the first question that must be answered is which Ottoman prince is meant by "Kyritzes." Zachariadou has argued that since the Greek *Kyritzes* is simply a translation of the Turkish *Çelebi*, İsa's brother may in fact have been Süleyman; however this is unlikely, since all other Greek sources reserve the name for Mehmed, calling Süleyman *Mousourmanes* or something similar.[34] If the Ottoman prince being referred to is indeed Mehmed, then the word *ἑνώσαντες* ('coming together') cannot possibly refer to an alliance, since Mehmed and İsa were enemies. Instead, the meaning must be that the two brothers came together in the same place and joined battle, an unusual usage in Greek, but a common one in Turkish from which the chronicle's information may have been translated.[35] The name "Kyritzes" is mentioned twice, and both references are almost certainly to the same Ottoman prince. If that prince was indeed Mehmed, then the last part of the chronicle appears to be referring to some sort of treaty between Mehmed and İsa, possibly also involving Byzantium and Emir Süleyman.

Unfortunately, such a treaty is not known from any other source, although as we will see below, the *Ahval* does make reference to an exchange of letters between Mehmed and İsa upon the latter's return to Anatolia. The chronicle's statement that İsa was sent back to the east "by means of letters" may also be a reference to the negotiations leading to this peace. If the "peace" (*ἀγάπη*) was between Mehmed and İsa, then the statement at the end of the chronicle that Kyritzes (Mehmed) "was not willing to fulfill the requirements of the peace, but to this moment is rousing [İsa] to a desire for killing" would make sense, since

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[33] Examples from the *Ahval* are Ankara in the conflict between Mehmed and Süleyman (chapter 3) and Edirne in the conflict between Musa and Mehmed (chapter 5). See also the cases of Koprian (Köprülü) and Philippopolis (Filibe, Plovdiv) in Konstantin the Philosopher (chapters 4 and 5).

[34] See Paul Wittek, "Der 'Beiname' des osmanischen Sultans Mehemmed I," 144–153.

[35] Two examples are *bir araya gelmek* and *berāber itmek / olmak*. According to Andreas Tietze et. al, *Redhouse Turkish / Ottoman-English Dictionary* (Istanbul: Sev Matbaacılık ve Yayıncılık, 1997), the first of these means 'to come together; to come at the same

as we will see below Mehmed and İsa fought three more battles during the summer of 1403. If, however, "Kyritzes" refers to Emir Süleyman as Zachariadou has suggested, then the word *ἑνώσαντες* ('came together') is probably a reference to the alliance between Süleyman and İsa against Mehmed that we have discussed above. In that case, since the word *ἑνώσαντες* would suggest the joining of forces, it is not an exaggeration to read our source as meaning that Süleyman provided troops to fight on İsa's side at Ulubad. Those troops may well have been led by Timurtaş, who was an experienced Ottoman general, which would explain Mehmed's treatment of Timurtaş after the battle. The "peace" (ἀγάπη) to which the chronicle refers must then be a reference to the treaty of 1403, as Zachariadou has suggested. The existence of a peace treaty between Byzantium and Emir Süleyman would explain why John VII accepted handing over İsa to Süleyman "by means of letters." However, there are at least two problems with this interpretation. One is that it is not at all clear in what way Süleyman ("Kyritzes"), "rousing [İsa] to a desire for killing [Mehmed]," would go against the treaty of 1403. Another is the rather odd fact that the enemy against whom the "great battle" was fought (i.e. Mehmed) is nowhere mentioned.

While it is possible to speculate at length about the meaning of obscure and enigmatic texts such as the above, when carried too far such speculation becomes little more than a sterile academic exercise. The important points to retain with regard to the Battle of Ulubad are that it was a major event with repercussions throughout the region; that it coincided with the first major reconfigurations in the balance of power in Anatolia after Timur's departure; and that it was more than just the private vendetta of two rival Ottoman princes, but was large enough to involve several other powers as well. As will become clear in the course of the present study, this is a pattern that was repeated many times during the Ottoman civil war.

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time; to clash.' As for the second, which literally means 'to make / be made together,' it was frequently used in Ottoman legal documents in the sense of bringing two litigants together to face each other in the courtroom. See Türk Dil Kurumu, *Tanıklarıyle Tarama Sözlüğü* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1963–1977), v. 1, 512.

Mehmed Çelebi's Enthronement in Bursa and the Burial of Bayezid I

After his victory over İsa at Ulubad, for a short time Mehmed Çelebi became the sole and uncontested Ottoman ruler in Anatolia. But Mehmed's heyday did not last long: by 18 May 1403, İsa had returned to Anatolia and was competing again for the Ottoman throne.[36] İsa's return to Anatolia led to new battles as well as new alliances between the Ottoman princes and the *beylik*s. As a result of these battles and alliances, probably by September 1403 İsa had been eliminated from the struggle for the Ottoman throne and Mehmed had reasserted his control over Ottoman Anatolia. But in the spring of 1404, Süleyman crossed the straits and replaced Mehmed in Bursa, forcing him to withdraw once again to Rum.

However sporadic and short-lived Mehmed Çelebi's control of Bursa may have been in the early part of the civil war, his advisers understood the political importance of the Ottoman capital (*dārü 'l-salṭanat*, *pā-yı taḫt*) and made sure to exploit to full political advantage the opportunity offered by its possession. The *Ahval* relates that immediately after his victory at Ulubad, the Ottoman prince affirmed his new position as ruler of Bursa by staging two important public ceremonies there. The first was an enthronement ceremony in which "at an auspicious time [Mehmed was placed] on the throne of his father."[37] As was customary on such occasions, the ceremony was accompanied by a public feast lasting several days. By this formal enthronement ceremony in Bursa, Mehmed made public his bid for the legacy of Yıldırım Bayezid, announcing it to his brothers, the rulers of the *beylik*s, and the greater populace of western Anatolia. According to our source, once the festivities were over, Mehmed occupied İznik, which offered little resistance. İsa's defeat at Ulubad and Mehmed's enthronement in Bursa had apparently had the desired effect of creating the impression that İsa's rule was over.

After İznik, the *Ahval* relates that Mehmed went to Yenişehir, where "the people and provincial cavalry (*sipāhīler*) of the provinces of Karasi and Saruhan and Aydın came to him and placed themselves at his

[36] The *terminus ante quem* for İsa's return to Anatolia is provided by the Genoese account books of Pera, which state that by that date İsa had sent an ambassador to Pera from "Turchia." See Iorga, *Notes et Extraits (ROL)*, 84. See also Zachariadou, *Süleyman Çelebi*, 288.

[37] OA, 68b; Mz, 116.

service with all their hearts and souls, saying 'May your throne and *devlet* [imperial fortune] be lasting!'"[38] This description bears an obvious resemblance to the traditional Islamic oath of allegiance (*bay'a*), whose principal purpose was to confirm the ruler in his authority and bind those taking the oath to obey that authority.[39] It is significant that while the provincial cavalry and populace of the *beylik*s of Saruhan and Aydın are mentioned, there is no word of their rulers accepting Mehmed's authority. This is because with the exception of Yakub of Germiyan, with whom we have seen Mehmed had concluded an alliance right before the Battle of Ulubad, those rulers had not accepted the Ottoman prince's claims. As we will see, upon İsa's return to Anatolia several *beylik* rulers would form alliances with him against Mehmed, who now posed the greatest threat to them. Finally, it should be noted that by mentioning the population and cavalry of the *beylik*s, the *Ahval* conveys the message that Mehmed enjoyed the loyalty of these people while their own rulers did not. While it is difficult to know whether this is an accurate representation of the situation in western Anatolia at the time, Halil İnalcık has suggested that many *sipahi*s probably had an interest in the survival of the Ottoman central government, since it possessed registers proving their rights to their *timar*s.[40]

According to our source, after holding court at Yenişehir, Mehmed Çelebi returned to Bursa and began preparations there for the burial of his father. The funeral of the late Sultan Bayezid was an event of the highest political significance, which could be exploited to great effect. But before the funeral could be held, Mehmed had first to obtain his father's remains from Yakub of Germiyan. The *Ahval* relates that Mehmed wrote to Yakub asking for Bayezid's remains and for the young prince Musa:

> Then the Sultan ordered that a letter be written to Germiyan-oğlı Yakub Beg, in which he asked him to send his father's body along with his brother Musa Çelebi. The letter was delivered by messenger and reached Yakub Beg, who acted in accordance with its noble content. Adding his own men to those who had been dispatched by the Sultan, he sent back Yıldırım Khan's body with all appropriate honors along with Musa Çelebi. They took the body, brought it, and buried it in a hallowed place in Bursa. For seven days Quranic excerpts were recited over it, stews were cooked, and the Sultan did good deeds for the soul of the deceased,

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[38] OA, 69a; Mz, 116. For the meaning of *devlet* see 206, note 15.
[39] See E. Tyan, "bay'a," EI².
[40] İnalcık, "Meḥemmed I," 977.

> making the *seyyid*s [descendants of the Prophet] and poor people rich. And he assigned to certain villages the status of *waqf* [tax-free endowment] to contribute to the upkeep of the tomb's pious foundation.[41]

By holding elaborate funeral rites for his father Bayezid I in Bursa immediately after his own enthronement ceremony, Mehmed Çelebi thus reinforced the impression that he was Bayezid's rightful successor.

It should be remembered at this point that according to Yazdi, before leaving Anatolia, Timur had assigned the task of burying Bayezid to Musa Çelebi, to whom he had granted a *yarlıġ* making him the official ruler of Bursa. As has already been suggested, the fact that Musa was a minor meant that he needed a guardian. After Mehmed had taken Musa into his custody with the help of his ally Yakub of Germiyan, he could also present himself as his young brother's guardian, perhaps even using Timur's *yarlıġ* to legitimize his own rule in Bursa if necessary. Timur was still alive at this time, and there was a very real possibility that he might protest Mehmed's seizure of Bursa; in such an event, Mehmed could claim to be ruling the city on behalf of Musa. That this might have been the case is suggested also by the chronicler Aşıkpaşazade, who lived through the civil war and states that İsa was ousted from Bursa not by Mehmed, but by Musa.[42] Finally, there is good reason to believe that Mehmed feared Timur at this time. As we have seen, during his brief control of Bursa, Mehmed struck the only extant coin of the civil war on which Timur's name appears alongside that of an Ottoman prince as his overlord.[43]

The *Ahval*'s claim that Yıldırım Bayezid was buried by Mehmed Çelebi would seem at first to be contradicted by the fact that Bayezid's tomb (*türbe*) in Bursa bears an inscription with the name of Emir Süleyman, stating that it was built by him in early Muharram 809 (17–27 June 1406). The same inscription also informs us that the *türbe* was completed in Rabiʿ II of the same year (15 September – 13 October 1406).[44] As Ekrem Hakkı Ayverdi has pointed out in his discussion of the building and its inscription, the time between the two dates (less than four lunar months, and not five and a half as he claims) is

[41] OA, 69a; Mz, 116.
[42] Aşıkpaşazade, 72.
[43] The coin in question is dated 806 (21 July 1403 – 9 July 1404).
[44] Ekrem Hakkı Ayverdi, *Osmanlı Mi'mârîsinin İlk Devri*, 464–469.

extremely short for the construction of a building of that size, given that the dome alone would have taken over a month to build. In fact, as we have seen, both Yazdi and Doukas suggest that at the time of Bayezid's death, a *türbe* was already in existence. The endowment deed (*vakfiye*) of Bayezid's pious foundation also mentions this building, suggesting that Bayezid himself had already chosen the site of his tomb and made at least preliminary preparations for its construction. Of course, Bursa had been devastated by Timur's raids, and even if a building had existed it may have been badly damaged or totally destroyed. The *Ahval*, however, makes no mention of a building, simply stating that Mehmed buried his father "in a (the?) hallowed place in Bursa" (*Brūsa'da olan mevẓi'-i şerīfde*), adding also the important information that the prince assigned villages as *waqf* (*vakıf*) for his father's foundation. If any construction work was carried out on the tomb at all during the summer of 1403, which is unlikely since İsa is alleged to have besieged and burned Bursa at that time (see below), Emir Süleyman's inscription suggests that in the end it was Süleyman who finished it and took credit for its construction.[45] Of course, the fact that in one way or another both princes took credit for their father's burial—the inscription on Bayezid's türbe is the only known inscription of Emir Süleyman—reaffirms the importance of Yıldırım Bayezid's legacy for the succession struggles of the civil war.

The Later Battles of İsa and Mehmed Çelebi

The *Ahval* states that after burying his father, Mehmed Çelebi did not stay in Bursa for long, but that "after taking care of that matter, he left and toured the entire land" eventually ending up in Rum where he spent the summer of 1403.[46] Although our source states that everywhere Mehmed went people accepted his authority, so that upon reaching Tokat he "praised God, saying 'I am no longer uneasy about the state of the realm,'" the very fact that he did not stay in Bursa after conquering it suggests otherwise. As we have seen, by 18 May 1403 İsa had returned to Anatolia. Furthermore, after Ulubad the *beylik*s

[45] A parallel would be the Eski Cami in Edirne which was begun by Süleyman, continued by Musa, and completed by Mehmed.

[46] OA, 69a–69b; Mz, 116–117.

of Anatolia were still very much independent, and would soon make alliances with İsa against Mehmed. The *Ahval* attempts to hide these circumstances by presenting Mehmed's decision to return to Rum as prompted by a simple desire to spend the summer at home.

It is certainly true that Mehmed's continued control over Rum was essential for his political survival. His ability to hold onto that province for the entire duration of the civil war can be seen as the single most important factor in his eventual victory over his brothers. While there is no information about local leaders in Rum making moves to throw off their vassalage during Mehmed's absence in western Anatolia, there is a strong likelihood that had he not returned to Rum, such an event might indeed have taken place. As we saw in the last chapter, Mehmed and his advisers had taken great pains to reunite Rum under his rule after the Battle of Ankara. If Mehmed had not continued to assert his presence there, his alliances with the local tribal leaders might have collapsed, and the province would have been lost once again. The army guarding Rum for Mehmed must not have been too large; as we have seen, he had taken a significant number of fighters with him when he left Rum in early spring of 1403, with which he had defeated several adversaries. As a result he must have left few men behind to secure his home province, most probably just garrisons in the main towns. Finally, Mehmed's army was surely depleted after the Battle of Ulubad, and he must have known that it would be impossible to fight İsa again without gathering fresh fighters from among the tribal elements of Rum. Mehmed knew that the favorable situation after Ulubad would not last, and therefore needed to prepare himself for the next round of hostilities. All of this adds up to a plausible explanation for the prince's decision to return home at such a crucial time.

As we have seen, when Mehmed defeated İsa and took control of Bursa and Ottoman Anatolia from him, Emir Süleyman, who was interested in eventually extending his power over Anatolia, was able to obtain İsa from the Byzantines and send him back to Anatolia. According to the *Ahval*, İsa returned with Süleyman's ambassador from Constantinople to Gallipoli, and was immediately ferried by his brother across the straits to Karasi. Thanks to the records of the Genoese colony of Pera, we know that by 18 May 1403 İsa was back in Anatolia (see above). The *Ahval* states that upon his arrival in Karasi, İsa occupied that province, whose population offered no resistance, saying that they would willingly submit to whichever of the Ottoman princes

was victorious in the end.[47] According to the same source, after leaving Karasi, İsa went to the town of Beypazarı "and stayed there, thinking of preparations for the winter."[48] By statements such as these, our source creates the impression that İsa did not return to Anatolia until the fall of 1403, and that during his absence Mehmed spent a quiet summer in Rum. But more objective sources suggest otherwise. At the beginning of his embassy to Timur, between 18–30 September 1403, the Castilian ambassador Ruy Gonzales de Clavijo disembarked on the island of Chios, where he wrote the following:

> While [we] the aforementioned ambassadors were there [in Chios] news came to the effect that the eldest son of the Turk defeated by Timur was dead, he who was to inherit Turkey; and that his other brothers were fighting one another to see who would become lord of the land.[49]

This passage must refer to İsa, since he was the only one of Bayezid's sons who "was to inherit Turkey," but had probably lost his authority and been killed by September of 1403, when Clavijo was writing. However the *Ahval*'s timeframe is rather different: the chronicle states that İsa spent the winter of 1403–1404 in Beypazarı as Mehmed's guest (!) and then attacked his possessions "with the coming of spring."[50] Such a timeframe is difficult to accept, since by March of 1404 Süleyman was in Anatolia issuing documents out of Bursa, and there is no evidence to indicate that İsa may have still been alive at that time.[51]

As has already been suggested, the timing of Mehmed's battles with İsa presents a difficult dilemma to the historian trying to reconstruct those events. On the one hand, Clavijo's report and Süleyman's pres-

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[47] OA, 70b; Mz, 117–118.

[48] OA, 70b; Mz, 118.

[49] Clavijo, ed. Estrada, 25: *E estando aquí los dichos enbaxadores ouieron nuebas en commo al fijo mayor del turco [que] venció el taburlán, que era finado el que auia de heredar la turquía; e que otros sus hermanos auian gerra en vno sobre el Senorío dela tierra.* Along with the Byzantine short chronicle discussed earlier in this chapter, Zachariadou used this passage from Clavijo to support her theory that Süleyman killed İsa after the two brothers came together and attacked Timur. See Zachariadou, "Süleyman Çelebi," 286–291. As with the Byzantine chronicle, however, the passage from Clavijo is somewhat ambiguous. The clause "the eldest son of the Turk defeated by Timur was dead" (al fijo mayor del turco [que] venció el taburlán, que era finado) could mean either that 'the eldest son of the Turk, the Turk who was defeated by Timur [i.e. Bayezid], was dead' or that 'the eldest son of the Turk was defeated by Timur, and was dead.' Zachariadou chose the second interpretation, which appears the least likely.

[50] OA, 71a; Mz, 118.

[51] See Paul Wittek, "Zu einigen frühosmanischen Urkunden (V)," WZKM 57 (1961): 102–117; Zachariadou, "Süleyman Çelebi," 290–291.

ence in Bursa in March of 1404 seem to leave little doubt that by the fall of 1403, İsa was no longer a player in the Ottoman dynastic struggle. But on the other, the *Ahval* describes in detail three major battles between Mehmed and İsa, which took place over a large geographical area (see below). Since some of those battles appear to have involved troops of up to ten thousand men, it is difficult to believe that they could all have taken place in the space of a single summer. In fact, it is possible that the chronology of the *Ahval* was distorted to suit narrative and ideological ends. By prolonging Mehmed's battles with İsa, the anonymous author of the *Ahval* would have succeeded in filling a large gap in the narrative created by Süleyman's occupation of Anatolia, during which Mehmed was for the most part unable to confront his brother. As we will see in the next chapter, the chronicle does allude to such a situation, but avoids presenting it in its true light. Apparently one way in which the author was able to achieve his narrative goals was by devoting a great deal of time and space to Mehmed's successful battles against İsa. Unfortunately, documentary sources on the situation in Anatolia at this time are not adequate to provide a definitive solution to this chronological puzzle, so we are left with little choice but to accept that by fall of 1403 (or March of 1404 at the latest) İsa was no longer a participant in the Ottoman dynastic struggles.

Let us now return to Clavijo. While the information he conveys in the above passage is for the most part clear and unambiguous, there is one detail that needs further elaboration. That is his suggestion that the dead Ottoman prince (i.e. İsa) was Bayezid's eldest son. In fact, as we have seen, Emir Süleyman was almost certainly the eldest son of Yıldırım Bayezid.[52] Zachariadou has stated that "according to both Ottoman and Byzantine tradition, Isa was the elder son of Bayezid," but her statement is based on a misreading of the text of the *Ahval*, and only Chalkokondyles considers İsa to be Bayezid's eldest son.[53] Clavijo's confusion over İsa's age may stem from the fact that the Castilian ambassador was from Western Europe, where the prevailing succession system was primogeniture. After Bayezid's death, İsa had become ruler of Bursa, the capital of Ottoman "Turchia"—so for Clavijo it was

[52] For the relative age of Bayezid's sons, see chapter 1.

[53] Zachariadou, "Süleyman Çelebi," 286; Chalkokondyles, ed. Darkò, I, 159. The *Ahval* (on which the account of Neşri that Zachariadou cites is based) simply states that İsa is Mehmed's older brother. See OA, 67a; Mz, 115. For a translation of this passage, see the section on the Battle of Ulubad above.

reasonable to assume that İsa must have therefore been his oldest son. It is worth pointing out that contrary to the above passage, later in his account Clavijo calls Süleyman the eldest son of Bayezid.[54] While the meaning of these passages is debatable, at the very least it would appear that Clavijo is not to be trusted as an authority on matters of Ottoman dynastic succession.

While the *Ahval* does not provide a reliable chronology of Mehmed's battles with İsa, its account is nevertheless very rich, and allows us to glean a number of important facts about those battles. We have seen that when İsa returned to Anatolia in May of 1403, Mehmed Çelebi retreated to his home province of Rum, apparently unable to confront his brother at that time. The *Ahval* claims that İsa went to Beypazarı, from where he sent an ambassador to Mehmed with a letter recognizing him as his sovereign and asking to be treated as a guest. Supposedly Mehmed accepted this arrangement and welcomed his brother into his realm, sending İsa a reply to that effect accompanied by gifts. We are also told that Mehmed took care of İsa's winter accommodations in Beypazarı.[55] While some sort of diplomatic exchange between the two brothers may indeed have taken place, it is impossible to accept the *Ahval*'s story as such. Instead it should be seen as a fabrication to explain İsa's presence in Ottoman Anatolia at a time when Mehmed was supposedly in control there. As has already been suggested and will be discussed in detail in chapter 6, the author of the *Ahval* seems to have felt the need to create the impression that Mehmed was willing to share power with his brothers.

According to our source, after Beypazarı İsa went to Sivrihisar, from where he entered the territory of Karaman and "fought several battles with the Karamanids."[56] While there is no other record of İsa campaigning against Karaman, as we will see in a moment, not long after this event the Karamanids made an alliance with Mehmed. İsa's hostile actions toward Karaman may have even resulted indirectly in his death, since, as we will see, after his final military confrontation with Mehmed he supposedly took refuge in Karaman; however he was forced to leave on account of the Karamanids' peace with Mehmed, ending up in Eskişehir where he was allegedly strangled (see below). As for Sivrihisar, the town from where İsa allegedly launched his attack

[54] Clavijo, ed. Estrada, 69.
[55] OA, 70b–71a; Mz, 118.
[56] OA, 71a; Mz, 118.

against Karaman, it is mentioned again later in the *Ahval* in connection with Emir Süleyman, whose effort to occupy it supposedly also brought him into conflict with the Karamanids. Like Ankara, Sivrihisar was on the border between the Ottoman and Karamanid lands and was contested by both states.

Whatever the purpose and outcome of İsa's campaigns in Karaman, the *Ahval* informs us that he soon re-entered Ottoman territory with hostile intentions:

> Circling the realm, [İsa] descended upon Bursa. Everywhere he went, he showed the Sultan's letter and was thus able to enter. In the same way, in Bursa he took out the letter and showed it around, saying "Now I have become one with my brother and made peace with him, and here is his sign (*nişān*) to prove it." Speaking those words he wanted to enter the city walls. But the inhabitants of Bursa refused to accept this. The entire population escaped and entered the citadel, closing the door and leaving İsa Beg outside. He tried to win them over in a thousand ways, but the townsmen refused to submit. In the end he became enraged and set the city ablaze, burning it from one end to the other and turning it into a wasteland.[57]

The letter to which our source is referring is the one that Mehmed had supposedly sent İsa while he was staying at Beypazarı, in which he had accepted him as his guest. In fact, this passage bears a fascinating resemblance to the earlier episode from the *Ahval* in which Timur's appointee Kara Devletşah tried to enter Amasya by showing Timur's certificate of appointment (*yarlıġ* = *nişān*).[58] In this way, the chronicle is probably attempting to equate İsa's injustice to that of the Timurid appointee. Be that as it may, the information in our source should not be dismissed out of hand; as we have seen above, it cannot be ruled out that Mehmed and İsa did indeed have some sort of treaty at this time. If this was the case, then İsa's attempt to capture Bursa had clearly signalled the end of the peace between the two brothers and thus led to their second military confrontation. The *Ahval* states that Mehmed won the battle despite the fact that İsa had ten thousand men, while Mehmed, who did not want to fight his brother, had brought only three thousand.[59] After his defeat, İsa fled north from Bursa to Gürle via

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[57] OA, 71a–71b; Mz, 118.

[58] OA, 48a; Mz, 100. See chapter 1.

[59] It is impossible to know whether these numbers are accurate, but it should be noted that they are comparable to those in other sources on the period: see for example Doukas 18:9–10.

Bednos.[60] Because the population of the province was hostile to him, İsa was forced to leave the Ottoman realm and to take refuge with İsfendiyar in Kastamonu. As for Mehmed, after his victory he visited Bursa and gave orders for its reconstruction.[61]

Meanwhile, in Kastamonu, İsfendiyar and İsa were forging an alliance. The *Ahval* suggests that İsfendiyar's friendly attitude toward the Ottoman prince was motivated by a sense of duty toward the late Sultan Bayezid. But as we have seen, İsfendiyar and the other *beylik* rulers were really motivated by the desire to maintain the *status quo* after Ankara by preventing any particular Ottoman prince from becoming too powerful. Viewed in this light, the İsfendiyar-İsa alliance appears rather like the earlier one between Yakub of Germiyan and Mehmed, whose true meaning is likewise distorted by the pro-Ottoman author(s) of the *Ahval*. In the case of İsfendiyar a further incentive may also have been the hostility caused by the fact that he and Mehmed shared a common border in Rum. Moreover, as we saw earlier, Mehmed had fought two skirmishes with İsfendiyar's nephew Kara Yahya while Timur was still in Anatolia. Whatever İsfendiyar's ulterior motives, it seems that he agreed to support İsa in his next confrontation with Mehmed.

The *Ahval* states that after concluding their alliance, İsfendiyar and İsa attempted to take Mehmed by surprise by attacking Ankara. This suggests that by the summer of 1403, when these events were taking place, the important fortress of Ankara had come under Mehmed Çelebi's control. Indeed, as we will see in the next chapter, when Emir Süleyman moved his operations to Anatolia in the spring of 1404, Ankara was the city chosen by Mehmed to make a stand against his brother. It is not clear whether İsa and İsfendiyar were able to capture Ankara during their attack on the city—in fact the attack seems to have amounted to little more than a diversion, and our source relates that by the time Mehmed had arrived there with his army, İsa and İsfendiyar had already moved on to Gerede. It would seem that İsa's destination was once again Bursa. But he and İsfendiyar were unable to reach the city, as Mehmed soon caught up with them and defeated them near Gerede. After their defeat, we are told that the allies returned to

[60] Bednos is well known from early Ottoman history, and was located near the modern village of Balat Köyü. Gürle is on the southwestern side of the Lake of İznik.

[61] OA, 72a–72b; Mz, 118–119.

Kastamonu, while Mehmed renewed his claim over Bursa by visiting it once again before returning to Rum.[62]

According to our source, when Mehmed had defeated the İsa-İsfendiyar alliance and returned to Rum, he decided to make some alliances of his own:

> While [Mehmed Çelebi] feasted in Tokat, Karaman-oğlı sent his head military judge (*kazasker*), and ambassadors also arrived from the realm of Dulkadır-oğlı. Relations were mended; animosity was removed; they made peace and there was friendship between them. At that time, gifts and tokens of betrothal were sent to the daughter of Dulkadır-oğlı, who was thus engaged to the Sultan.[63]

While this information receives little emphasis in our source compared to the detailed and rhetorically embellished battle descriptions that precede and follow it, it is in fact most significant, as it allows us to discern the true nature of the political situation in Anatolia at this time. As with Mehmed's first victory at Ulubad, after İsa's return to Anatolia the outcome of each military confrontation gave rise to reconfigurations in the alliances between the rival Ottoman princes and the *beylik*s. These reconfigurations seem to have been based on a complex political calculus of what might be gained or lost from a given alliance. As we have seen, after returning to Anatolia İsa had campaigned against Karaman; the Karamanids therefore had good reason to make an alliance against him with his rival Mehmed.

It is also important to realize that despite Mehmed Çelebi's repeated victories over İsa, to some Mehmed may still have appeared at this time as the Ottoman prince posing the smallest danger of reviving Ottoman imperial ambitions. We have seen that İsa was probably supported by the powerful Emir Süleyman, while Mehmed's army was based in Rum and seems to have still been rather small. Despite having made repeated efforts to assert his control over Bursa, those efforts amounted to little more than political appearances, since he could not hold the city but constantly had to return to his home base. Finally, Mehmed Çelebi's important marriage alliance with the ruler of the neighboring tribal confederation of Dulkadır, which was especially rich in horses and horsemen, demonstrates his continued emphasis on tribal politics.[64]

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[62] OA, 73b–74b; Mz, 120–121.

[63] OA 74b–75a; Mz 121.

[64] On the role of the Dulkadır (also known as *Ẕū'l-ḳadr*) in the politics of eastern Anatolia, see John Woods, *The Aqquyunlu*, 31–32. On the horses of the Dulkadır and

As we will see in chapter 5, the tribal cavalry of the Dulkadır played a central role in Mehmed's final campaign against Musa (1413).

Let us return now to İsa's activities after his third defeat by Mehmed. The *Ahval* relates that after coming back to Kastamonu with İsfendiyar, İsa stayed there for a while until he received news of Mehmed's return to Rum. Then he decided to act:

> With one or two hundred men İsa Beg left Kastamonu again, and moving from mountaintop to mountaintop after a thousand trials and tribulations was able to enter the realm once more. This time no one from among the *reʿāyā* [tax-paying subjects] submitted to him, but rather wherever possible they even confronted him militarily, not letting him enter their territory. He came there moving in that manner, and after bypassing Bursa he descended on Mihaliç. The population of Mihaliç fought with him and didn't let him into the town. And he begged them, saying, "Be gracious and let me settle down in this place until my brother comes." So he settled in that place.[65]

It seems that after his defeat by Mehmed, İsfendiyar was no longer willing or able to provide military support to İsa for another round of hostilities with his brother. Such an action would have been dangerous for the ruler of Kastamonu, since Mehmed was his neighbor and now had the upper hand. As we will see in the next chapter, İsfendiyar would later help Mehmed against Süleyman by harboring Musa (who was initially Mehmed's ally) and sending him to Rumeli as a diversion. As for İsa, he had been discredited in the eyes of the Bithynian population, who understood that Mehmed was winning the succession struggle. But this time Bithynia was not İsa's destination: he was headed for Aydın.

In its characteristic style in which Mehmed is presented as an epic hero, the *Ahval* creates the impression that İsa entered Mehmed's territory without a clear plan, and that Mehmed reacted to news of the event with a similar lack of preparation by simply "mount[ing] his horse with ten thousand brave fighters" and marching out of Rum to confront him.[66] But this impression is contradicted by the alleged size of Mehmed's army, a whopping ten thousand men instead of the usual three thousand.[67] In fact, the expanded size of Mehmed's army

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their role in the region, see Barbara Kellner-Heinkele, "The Turkomans and Bilad aš-Šam," *Land Tenure and Social Transformation in the Middle East*, ed. T. Khalidi (Beirut: American University of Beirut, 1984): 169–180.

[65] OA, 75a–75b; Mz, 121.

[66] OA, 75b; Mz, 121.

[67] See OA, 72a, 73b; Mz, 118, 120.

suggests that he had received assistance from his new allies Karaman and Dulkadır. However, by the time Mehmed had reached Mihaliç, his brother had already moved on to İzmir and made an alliance with Cüneyd and the *beyliks* of western Anatolia. As we have seen, after Timur's departure from Anatolia, Cüneyd had asserted his authority over İzmir as a representative of the former Ottoman *status quo*. Most of our information on Cüneyd is derived from the chronicle of Doukas, but the Byzantine chronicler makes no mention of Cüneyd's alliance with İsa, whose career he generally ignores. It is unclear whether at this early phase of the civil war Cüneyd was already acting in the name of Emir Süleyman, whose authority he accepted after Süleyman moved his operations to Anatolia (see below). If Cüneyd was indeed already claiming to represent Emir Süleyman, this may have played a part in his alliance with İsa.

According to the *Ahval*, Cüneyd was able to persuade the rulers of Aydın, Menteşe, Saruhan, and Teke to support İsa, and there was a great battle somewhere near İzmir in which Mehmed once again defeated İsa and his allies. Following that battle, our source states that İsa fled to Karaman "and disappeared there," while Cüneyd accepted Mehmed's authority, was forgiven and was confirmed in his position as governor of İzmir. After the battle, Mehmed "marched with his army and conquered Aydın, Saruhan, Teke, Menteşe and Germiyan" before returning to his throne in Bursa.[68] While it is possible that Mehmed toured the *beylik*s with his army in order to assert his position, it is difficult to accept that he really "conquered" them at that time, since with the exception of Saruhan (whose *emīr* Hızırşah Beg apparently resisted Mehmed's incursions into his territory and was killed), they continued to exist independently for the duration of the civil war.[69] The reference to Germiyan is especially interesting, since it suggests that by this time Yakub II had already broken his earlier alliance with Mehmed.

Little is known about İsa's final fate apart from Clavijo's report suggesting that by late September of 1403 he was dead. In any case, it is clear that after his fourth and final confrontation with Mehmed, İsa ceased to be a player in the Ottoman dynastic struggles. As we have seen, the *Ahval* makes no mention of İsa's death, stating simply

[68] OA, 75b–77b; Mz, 121–123.

[69] See İ.H. Uzunçarşılı, "Mehmed I," İA, 498. I have been unable to locate Uzunçarşılı's source for this information.

that he escaped to Karaman and "disappeared." This should come as no suprise given the fact that the *Ahval* makes a point of never blaming Mehmed for any of his brothers' deaths.[70] However, later Ottoman chroniclers did not share the *Ahval*'s sensitivities: according to the sixteenth-century chronicler Hoca Saʿdeddin, after taking refuge in Karaman, İsa was expelled by the Karamanids on account of their treaty with Mehmed and eventually ended up in Eskişehir, where he was apprehended by Mehmed's agents and killed in a bath.[71] We have seen that at that time Mehmed probably did have a treaty with Karaman, which makes it difficult to understand why İsa would have taken refuge there in the first place.

In conclusion, by September of 1403, Mehmed had won the first round of the civil war by wresting control of Bursa and Ottoman Anatolia from his brother İsa in a series of battles. The struggles between the two brothers had been long and bloody, involving also Emir Süleyman, Byzantium, and the *beylik*s of Anatolia. As we will see in the following chapters, the patterns and alliances established during this early phase of the civil war would continue to develop in the years to come, some changing and others remaining the same. As for Mehmed, he may have defeated İsa, but his position was still far from secure: Emir Süleyman did not waste time in taking advantage of the power vacuum left by the elimination of İsa. Sometime between autumn 1403 and March 1404, Süleyman crossed the straits and became master of Bursa, and Mehmed was forced once again to return to Rum.

[70] See below, chapters 4–6.

[71] Ḫōca Saʿdeddīn, *Tācu't-tevārīḫ* (Istanbul: Ṭabʿḫāne-i Āmire, 1279/1862–1863), 235.

CHAPTER THREE

ANATOLIA BETWEEN EMİR SÜLEYMAN AND MEHMED ÇELEBİ (BEFORE MARCH 1403 – 14 JUNE 1410)

As we saw in the last chapter, in a series of campaigns probably taking place in the spring and summer of 1403, Mehmed Çelebi succeeded in wresting control of Bursa and the rest of Ottoman Anatolia from his brother İsa. The struggles between the two brothers involved the Turkish *beylik*s of Anatolia, which formed alliances supporting one or the other claimant to the Ottoman throne. After these events, for a short time Mehmed was the uncontested ruler of Ottoman Anatolia. But as soon as İsa was eliminated, Emir Süleyman gathered a large army from Rumeli and crossed the straits. Mehmed's forces were not powerful enough to resist him, since he had on his side most of the Ottoman army that had survived the Battle of Ankara; moreover, with the exception of tribal elements in Rum and Dulkadır, now few Anatolian leaders had an interest in supporting Mehmed since he had become too powerful and was a threat to their existence as independent rulers. In a short time, Süleyman's supremacy would enable Mehmed to regain allies among the *beylik*s of Anatolia.

In this manner, Süleyman was able to occupy most of Ottoman Anatolia, while Mehmed withdrew once again to Rum. Süleyman was unable to penetrate Rum, since it was Mehmed's stronghold, and a long stalemate ensued which lasted for approximately five years. It finally ended when Süleyman's enemies in Anatolia and Rumeli united against him in support of Mehmed, who had devised a plan to send Musa to Rumeli as a diversion. With the support of the Voivoda of Wallachia and the raiders of Rumeli, Musa began to gain control of Rumeli, eventually forcing Süleyman to return there (14 June 1410). Not surprisingly, after Süleyman's departure, Bursa came once again under the control of Mehmed.

Because of the stalemate between Mehmed and Süleyman, in Anatolia the period 1404–1409 was by far the quietest in the civil war. After Süleyman's initial operations in 1403–1404 in which he made great territorial gains, the overall situation there seems to have reached a bal-

ance which was only occasionally interrupted by skirmishes between Süleyman, Mehmed, and the *beylik*s of Anatolia. In Rumeli also, thanks to Süleyman's treaties, conditions remained relatively peaceful until the arrival of Musa. However, some limited operations do appear to have taken place during this time under various local frontier lords (*uc begleri*). Unfortunately, the fact that the period was mostly uneventful means that our sources on it are limited to a few passages in the chronicles, which while intriguing are difficult to interpret in the absence of substantial documentary evidence. Unlike the earlier struggles between Mehmed and İsa that form the subject of the previous chapter, or the later ones involving Musa to which we will turn in the next two, the fact that the conflict between Süleyman and Mehmed was played out almost entirely in the Anatolian hinterland made it of little interest to foreign powers such as Byzantium or Venice. As a result, few outside reports have survived on this period, leaving us with no alternative but to try to glean from the chronicles what conclusions we can, based on an overall understanding of the situation at the time.

Emir Süleyman's Conquest of Bursa and Ankara

As we saw in the last chapter, when the Castilian ambassador Ruy Gonzalez de Clavijo disembarked on Chios in September of 1403, he received news that İsa had been killed and that his brothers were fighting over the throne of "Turchia." It is therefore likely that by this time Emir Süleyman had already crossed to Anatolia, or was preparing to do so. Süleyman's haste should come as no surprise, since the elimination of İsa meant that Mehmed had strengthened his position in Anatolia and had to be dealt with immediately before he got any stronger. While the precise timing of Süleyman's crossing to Anatolia is uncertain, it is clear that by March of 1404 Süleyman was in Bursa, since he issued a document from there.[1] Moreover, when Clavijo passed through the Black Sea towns of Harakleia Pontika (Bender Ereğlisi) and Samsun on his way to Trebizond in spring 1404, he found those towns under the control of Süleyman.[2]

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[1] See above, chapter 2.

[2] Clavijo, ed. Estrada, 69, 73; See also Zachariadou, "Süleyman Çelebi," 291.

The *Ahval* creates the impression that Süleyman crossed to Anatolia later, in fall 1404 or even as late as spring 1405. As we have seen, this temporal distortion appears to have been motivated by a desire on the part of the chronicle's author to make Mehmed's rule over Bursa appear longer, thereby decreasing the time during which Mehmed was inactive and confined to Rum after Süleyman's arrival in Anatolia. This effect is achieved by prolonging the narrative of Mehmed's struggles with İsa, which is in turn achieved by claiming that İsa spent the winter of 1403–1404 in Beypazarı as Mehmed's guest. Despite this chronological discrepancy, the *Ahval* provides valuable information on Süleyman's operations in Anatolia and his struggles with Mehmed. Thus, our source relates that when Süleyman began to cross the straits with his armies, Mehmed was in Bursa:

> As [Mehmed] was feasting in Bursa, news came that "your brother Emir Süleyman has gathered an endless (*bī-ḥadd*) army and is crossing the sea to this side. His goal and desire is to seize the land and take your father's throne from you, and to then do with you what he wishes." When the Sultan heard this he became very upset. He gathered his high-ranking begs and viziers and conferred with them, asking, "what is the right way to deal with this matter, and what should we do?" They all thought it best not to face Emir Süleyman in open battle, but rather to seek out the best place to confront him while moving very carefully. Whenever they found the opportunity, they could attack those they got their hands on, while at the same time informing and gathering their own forces. The Sultan gave preference to that plan, and left from Bursa heading in the direction of Ankara.[3]

In the above passage, it is important to note the reference to the size of Süleyman's army, which is probably more than just a literary topos. Only a few lines down, our source refers again to the size of Süleyman's army, calling it "so huge that the ground cannot support it" (*yir ü gök götürmez*). The idea that Süleyman's army was huge is further reinforced by the advice that Mehmed is said to have received from his viziers, which is almost word for word the same as they gave him about attacking Timur's army after the Battle of Ankara.[4] By means of such devices, our source makes it clear that Süleyman had arrived with an army from Rumeli that Mehmed was completely unable to face in open battle. This is in agreement with Doukas' information on Süleyman's campaign against Cüneyd in Aydın (see below) where

[3] OA, 77b–78a; Mz, 123.
[4] See OA, 45b–46a; Mz, 99.

he states that Süleyman had twenty-five thousand men on his side.[5] As we have seen, many Ottoman fighters fleeing the Battle of Ankara had taken refuge in Rumeli, where there were also large numbers of raiders (*akıncı*) left unemployed by Süleyman's peaceful policies toward the Christian powers. Of course it is impossible to know if these people were desparate enough to fight against a Muslim adversary, and an Ottoman to boot; but this cannot be ruled out. At any rate, it seems that Süleyman crossed the straits with a very large army. It is interesting to speculate about how this army was transported, since as we have seen, Süleyman had few ships of his own. A logical guess would be that he was assisted by the Byzantines, who were of course his allies, but who presumably also hoped that a military confrontation between the two Ottoman princes would weaken them both.

Under such circumstances, Mehmed's only hope was to take refuge in a powerful fortress, from where he might stand a chance of resisting his brother's onslaught. Since Bursa had been looted by Timur's armies and later burned by İsa, its fortifications were probably insufficient for this purpose. But Mehmed also possessed Ankara, an important city famous for its strong fortifications; he and his court therefore decided to abandon Bursa to Süleyman and make a final stand at Ankara.[6] For Mehmed, Ankara had the added advantage of being relatively close to his power base of Rum, where he had vassals and allies. Unlike the western Anatolian *beylik*s which, with the exception of Germiyan, had supported İsa and could therefore not be counted on as vassals, in central Anatolia Mehmed could rely on the support of the local Turcoman and Tatar tribal leaders. Moreover, we have seen that Mehmed had a close relationship with the Turcoman confederation of Dulkadır to his east, and had also made an alliance against İsa with the powerful *beylik* of Karaman to his south. In reality, it is doubtful that after 1402 powerful *beylik*s such as Karaman or Germiyan would possess any real loyalty toward Mehmed or any other Ottoman prince, since they were primarily concerned with prolonging their own existence and power which would be threatened by any prince strong enough to reunite the Ottoman realm under his rule. In general, it can therefore be said that

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[5] Doukas 18:10.

[6] For the history of Ankara and its fortifications, which had earned it the name *Ḳal'at al-Salāsil* ("fortress of the chains") see F. Taeschner, "Ankara," EI^2; Paul Wittek, "Zur Geschichte Angoras im Mittelalter," *Festschrift G. Jacob zum siebzigsten Geburtstag 26. Mai 1932 gewidmet von Freunden und Schülern*, ed. Theodor Menzel (Leipzig: Harrassowitz, 1932): 329–352.

the alliances of the *beylik*s and other powers with the Ottoman princes of the civil war followed the principle of "my enemy's enemy is my friend."

Unfortunately for Mehmed, his hopes of making a stand against Süleyman at Ankara with the help of his allies were not realized. While the *Ahval* alleges that Mehmed "sent letters to all corners of the earth saying, 'let the armies of Anatolia gather at Ankara,'" it seems that few of his vassals actually showed up. The only one mentioned by name is a certain Tatar chieftain named Toyran Beg, who at first pledged to help Mehmed against Süleyman but later changed his mind when he saw the size of Süleyman's army. Toyran and his men left Ankara and took to pillaging the surrounding area for their own private gain, forcing Mehmed to confront them militarily. According to our source, Toyran was defeated and escaped, while his family was captured and sent to Ankara.[7] This episode is rather reminiscent of the earlier chapters in the *Ahval* describing Mehmed's petty struggles with the local rulers of Rum; that is because as soon as Süleyman arrived in Anatolia, Mehmed's position came to resemble what it had been in the early months of the civil war, when he was struggling to establish himself in the region.

Let us examine the struggle for Ankara in more detail. The *Ahval* states that by the time Süleyman and his armies reached the city, Mehmed and his court had changed their minds about making a stand there, deciding instead to return to Rum. Their reasoning is not hard to understand, given that Süleyman's army was very large and that Mehmed had been unable to gather sufficient armies to make a stand even in a city as well fortified as Ankara. Most importantly, had Mehmed himself stayed in Ankara and Süleyman succeeded in sacking the city, he would have run the risk of being captured by his older brother. Mehmed therefore departed with his court for Rum, leaving Ankara in the hands of its governor Firuz-oğlı Yakub Beg. As his name indicates, this man was the son of Firuz Beg who was the Ottoman governor of Ankara in 1387, and had himself been governor of the city since 1399. In fact, he was an ancestor of Tursun Beg, the famous chronicler of Mehmed the Conqueror.[8] It seems that Yakub Beg was

[7] OA, 78a–79a; Mz, 123–124.

[8] For Tursun Beg's family tree, see Halil İnalcik and Rhoads Murphey, eds., *The History of Mehmed the Conqueror by Tursun Beg* (Minneapolis: Bibliotheca Islamica, 1978), 251.

important enough to remain governor of Ankara under Emir Süleyman, and then again when Mehmed retook the city after Süleyman's departure in 1410. But as we will see in chapter 5, he and Mehmed had a falling out in 1412 which resulted in Yakub's imprisonment in Tokat.

It is worth pausing for a moment to examine how the *Ahval* has represented Mehmed Çelebi's loss of Ankara, which if shown in its true light would have reflected most unfavorably upon its hero. Intriguingly, our source presents Mehmed's decision not to face Süleyman at Ankara as motivated by a sense of moral decency, since it would supposedly have been wrong for him to fight another Ottoman prince who was also his older brother:

> While the viziers were of two minds, saying, "should we stay or should we go?," Akbel Subaşı raised his head and said: "O Sultan of the world! At this juncture it is impossible to do battle, for your older brother who has come is an Ottoman (*'Oṣmān-oğlı*). Now the right thing to do is to make him compete for *devlet*. Let us make Firuz-oğlı Yakub Beg guardian of the fortress, while we leave the city and move around in the province in order to protect it. If your brother comes here and the population of the city pays homage to him, it is no problem, for as long as the inner fortress is still ours we will be able to win back the city. But even if we lose the inner fortress, God willing we will be given other opportunities. So long as your *devlet* is still awake, the city and its citadel will be regained." The Sultan accepted his plan, left the walls of Ankara, and marched on.[9]

From a political point of view, this is a fascinating argument. As we will see in chapter 6, where this question will be explored in further detail, passages such as the above shed light on popular attitudes toward Ottoman succession practices following Timur's intervention in Anatolia, which appear to have differed greatly from those that would prevail in the later fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. This point has already been touched upon briefly in the previous chapter in the case of Mehmed's conflict with İsa, where the *Ahval* shows a similar need to legitimize its protagonist's actions.

Let us return now to Süleyman's capture of Ankara. As we have seen above, our source states that when Mehmed withdrew to Rum, he left the defense of Ankara to Firuz-oğlı Yakub Beg, reasoning that even if the city was lost, the fortress would remain in his hands and he would be able to retake it. As Süleyman was approaching Ankara, we are told that the city's inhabitants deliberated and decided to deliver the city to him. The *Ahval* states that their decision was brought about by

[9] OA, 78b–79a; Mz, 123–124.

the reasonable fear that if they did not, Süleyman would besiege the city and kill them all.[10] Thus, Ankara surrendered to Emir Süleyman, whose army entered its gates. Meanwhile Yakub Beg and the rest of the garrison left there by Mehmed took refuge in the city's fortress, where they were able to hold out for several days before surrendering. At this point, the *Ahval* tells an elaborate story in order to justify the garrison's surrender to Süleyman. Supposedly Firuz-oğlı Yakub sent Mehmed a letter asking him to come to his assistance, to which Mehmed replied that he would be there the next day; but before Mehmed's reply could reach Yakub, Süleyman's grand vizier Çandarlı Ali Paşa intercepted it and replaced it with a forgery ordering Yakub to surrender the fortress to his brother. It is clear that this fanciful story should be added to the large body of lore in the Ottoman chronicle tradition that demonizes Ali Paşa and the Çandarlı family of viziers as the root of all social and political evil.[11]

As we will see in a moment, this is not the only story in the *Ahval* that places the blame for Mehmed's inability to deal with Süleyman during the period 1404–1409 on Ali Paşa's cunning ruses. Before discounting it as fiction, however, we should note that our source mentions by name the messengers that Firuz-oğlı Yakub Beg is alleged to have sent to Mehmed Çelebi. In fact there is no reason why some sort of exchange couldn't have taken place, given the fact that Yakub Beg had promised to defend Ankara, and that if he surrendered the fortress to Süleyman without Mehmed's permission, there was a good chance that he would suffer severe consequences. Indeed, this was probably one of the reasons Mehmed removed and imprisoned Yakub prior to his 1413 campaign against Musa, although as we will see later on there appear also to have been other reasons.

According to the *Ahval*, following Süleyman's occupation of Bursa and Ankara Mehmed was forced to withdraw to Rum via Beypazarı. Although his position during this time was weak, he was at least able to keep a strong hold on his own base. In the words of our source, Mehmed went to Amasya, where he was pursued by Emir Süleyman.

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[10] OA, 79b; Mz, 124: *ve hem pādişāhumuz oğlıdur, evvelā anuñla yavuz olmaḳ cāyiz degüldür.*

[11] When it comes to Ali Paşa, the *Ahval* shows a striking similarity to the Anonymous Chronicles in which Ali Paşa and the other Çandarlı viziers are the undisputed villains. As has been pointed out most recently by Cemal Kafadar, the roots of this demonization of the Çandarlı family are to be found in the social tensions created by Ottoman centralization under Yıldırım Bayezid and Mehmed II. See Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds*, 110–112 *et passim*.

But "he made his castles strong and stayed there. Even though Emir Süleyman made a thousand efforts, he was unable to break off a single stone from a single castle" and was forced to return to Bursa.[12] While noting the hyperbolic nature of the Ahval's statement, we must also acknowledge the truth that it represents: the inviolability of Rum and the loyalty of Mehmed's administration there were of crucial importance in the years to come, for it was easier for him to take advantage of divisions in his brothers' camps when he could count on a loyal base of his own.

The Stalemate and Süleyman's Activities in Anatolia

After Mehmed Çelebi's withdrawal to Rum, the overall situation in Anatolia reached a stalemate which lasted for several years (1404–1410). While those years were not entirely uneventful, overall, both Emir Süleyman and Mehmed Çelebi were able to hold on to their respective territories in Anatolia, making no significant advances at each other's expense. Süleyman's position was clearly the strongest, as he controlled Rumeli and most of Ottoman Anatolia, except of course the inland areas of Rum which belonged to Mehmed. As we have seen above, by the spring of 1404, Süleyman's possessions also included towns on the Black Sea coast as far east as Samsun. Süleyman's supremacy in Anatolia was undermined, however, by Mehmed's alliances with various *beylik*s: these alliances led to at least one attempt on Mehmed's part to seize Bursa from Süleyman, and finally his successful plan to send Musa to Rumeli as a diversion. Due to this latter move, in June of 1410 Süleyman was forced to return to Rumeli where he was eventually killed by Musa (17 February 1411). Upon Süleyman's return to Rumeli, Anatolia came once again under the control of Mehmed. These events will be discussed in chapters 4 and 5; now let us examine the situation in Anatolia prior to Mehmed's release of Musa.

As we will see below, after his first Anatolian campaign of 1403–1404, in which he took Bursa from his brother Mehmed, Emir Süleyman returned to Rumeli. But in the summer of 1405, the Ottoman prince crossed again to Anatolia and campaigned in Aydın. The timing of Süleyman's activity in Anatolia is apparent from Konstantin

[12] OA, 81a; Mz, 125.

the Philosopher's old Serbian biography of Stefan Lazarević, which speaks of two campaigns "in the east." According to the chronicler, the purpose of the first of these campaigns was for Süleyman "to take his father's inheritance," supposedly from İsa, who according to Konstantin was killed by Süleyman for this reason. Konstantin cannot be trusted on the purpose and details of Süleyman's campaigns in Anatolia, however, since he was living in Serbia. The chronicler then relates that after the campaign in question, Süleyman returned to Rumeli to face a revolt of certain towns in Bulgaria "led by the sons of the Bulgarian kings." After that situation had been dealt with, "things quieted down like after a storm, and King Süleyman campaigned in the East."[13]

Süleyman's second campaign in Anatolia can be dated with considerable precision thanks to a report sent to the Venetian colony in Crete dated 23 July 1405.[14] While parts of this report are unfortunately illegible, it is possible to glean from it that at the time of its writing, Süleyman (*Musulman Çalah*) was preparing to cross to Anatolia in order to face his brother Mehmed (*Creçi so fradelo*) in Theologo (Ayasoluk, modern Selçuk). As we saw above, it is clear from the chronicle of Doukas that at this time Cüneyd was acting in the name of Süleyman. We have also seen that in the summer of 1403, Cüneyd had made an alliance with İsa which had been crushed by Mehmed. The Cretan report also mentions Palatia (Miletos), suggesting that by July of 1405 Mehmed had formed an alliance with the rulers of Menteşe and Aydın, whose authority Cüneyd was busy undermining in the name of Süleyman. Unfortunately, the outcome of the conflict between Mehmed and Süleyman in Aydın is not known. The fact that the whole incident goes completely unmentioned in the *Ahval* suggests that it was unfavorable for Mehmed. Had it been favorable, its author would surely have had much to say about such a victory at a time when his protagonist was otherwise not doing well.

After 1405 Süleyman remained active in the Aydın region, where during the winter of 1405–1406 Cüneyd had seized the throne of Aydın by killing its ruler Umur and declaring himself independent of Ottoman authority.[15] Doukas describes in great detail Süleyman's campaign to subdue Cüneyd, in which, he states, Karaman and Germiyan were

[13] Konstantin the Philosopher, 26–30.
[14] Freddy Thiriet, *Duca di Candia*, 189. See also Zachariadou, *Trade and Crusade*, 86.
[15] See Zachariadou, *Trade and Crusade*, 85–89.

also involved with large armies on the side of Cüneyd.[16] Moreover it is known from a Venetian document dated 1407 that around that time, Süleyman's fleet had assembled near Gallipoli in order to sail against Theologo, Palatia, and Smyrna, where Süleyman apparently intended to repair the fortress destroyed by Timur.[17] While little is known about Mehmed's role in these events, it appears that he continued to be involved in the affairs of Aydın during this time. By June 1407, news had reached Ragusa that Süleyman had attacked Mehmed, who had apparently fled to a mountain near Smyrna.[18] It seems that Mehmed had an alliance with Aydın and Menteşe against Süleyman, who by that time had once again made Cüneyd his vassal and was using his influence in the area to regain territory lost after Ankara.

Aydın and Menteşe were not the only *beylik*s attacked by Emir Süleyman during his long presence in Anatolia. As has already been suggested, the *Ahval* makes mention of a campaign by Süleyman against Karaman, which resulted in the renewal of the alliance between Karaman and Mehmed Çelebi that had first come into being in opposition to İsa.[19] According to our source, sometime after Emir Süleyman took Bursa and Ankara from Mehmed, he gathered a large army for "a major campaign" (*ulu sefer*). When this army was ready, Süleyman received news from Sivrihisar "to the effect that 'If the Sovereign (*şehriyār*) comes in this direction we will hand over the city to him.'" He marched on Sivrihisar, but the promise was not fulfilled. Meanwhile, the Karamanids had gotten wind of the arrival of the Ottoman army and decided to attack it. Apparently they changed their minds when they saw the size of Süleyman's army, which pursued them deep into Karamanid territory, camping at Aksaray. The Ottoman general Evrenos is mentioned in connection with this campaign as Süleyman's second in command. When Süleyman's army was at Aksaray, the ruler of Karaman made contact with Mehmed Çelebi:

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[16] Doukas 18: 9–10. Doukas states that Cüneyd's army of five thousand men was joined by three thousand from Karaman and ten thousand from Germiyan, against Emir Süleyman's twenty-five thousand.

[17] Doukas 18: 5–9; Zachariadou, *Trade and Crusade*, 86; Anthony Luttrell, "The Hospitallers of Rhodes and the Turks (1306–1421)" in *Christians, Jews, and Other Worlds*, ed. P.F. Gallagher (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1988), 101–102.

[18] Gelcich and Thalloczy, *Diplomatarium*, 170–171; Zachariadou, *Trade and Crusade*, 86–87.

[19] OA, 84a–85b; Mz, 128–129.

> He wrote a letter to the Sultan and sent it with a man, suggesting that they meet in Kırşehir in the fortress of Cemale and swear an oath to be friends toward each other's friends and enemies toward each other's enemies. And if that came to pass, half of Karaman-oğlı's realm would belong to the Sultan. As soon as the two had become allies, they would force Emir Süleyman out of the land. According to that pact, the two of them met in the fortress of Cemale, and made the oath and treaty binding.

Our source claims that after this treaty was made, Evrenos and Süleyman agreed that their enemy was now too strong to fight in pitched battle, and therefore decided to take refuge in Ankara so that "if the enemy marches against us, we can fight them with the city behind our backs."[20]

Emir Süleyman's campaign against Karaman is not the only important event set in Anatolia at this time that is known exclusively from the *Ahval*. Our source also relates at considerable length an otherwise unknown attempt on the part of Mehmed Çelebi to seize Bursa from Süleyman. The story of this unsuccessful venture is told in much the same spirit as the earlier episode of Mehmed's loss of Ankara which we saw above, and as with that event, at its heart there is probably a kernel of truth. For as with the loss of Ankara, the *Ahval*'s account of Mehmed's unsuccessful attack on Süleyman also contains a similarly unlikely story in which Ali Paşa is the villain. If one accepts that the real Ali Paşa played at least some role in the event that inspired this story, this allows us to assign to it a *terminus ante quem* of 28 December 1406, the date of Ali Paşa's death.[21] Let us examine this incident in detail.

Sometime after Mehmed lost Bursa to Süleyman, the *Ahval* relates that he was visited in his court by a spy, who reported the following:

> O Shah of the World! A while ago you had sent your servant to Bursa. I went there and carried out a complete investigation. Your brother is very alone, having only six hundred men by his side. He busies himself night and day with drinking wine, in such a manner that he enters the hamam to drink wine and stays there feasting for an entire month. This is a most rare opportunity that will never come again. If you attack him in full force, there is a great chance of success.[22]

It should be pointed out immediately that like the wiles and ruses of Çandarlı Ali Paşa, references in the Ottoman and Byzantine chronicles to Emir Süleyman's drinking in the baths (hamams) should not to be

[20] OA, 85a–85b; Mz, 128–129.
[21] Wittek and Taeschner, "Die Vizirfamilie der Ǧandarlızāde."
[22] OA, 81a–81b; Mz, 125–126.

taken at face value. While there are indications that Süleyman did indeed enjoy wine and courtly life—and he was in good company, since such habits were by no means uncommon among medieval Islamic rulers—these stories in fact reflect a deeper agenda of opposition to the project of transforming the Ottoman emirate into a centralized sedentary empire on the Seljuk or Byzantine model. With this caveat, let us return to our story. When Mehmed and his begs had heard the spy's words, they immediately decided to take advantage of the opportunity presented and surprise Süleyman in Bursa. But when they reached the river Sakarya, they were intercepted by "one of Emir Süleyman's lords by the name of Süleyman Subaşı [who] had come to that place to carry out a land survey." This man hurried to Bursa and informed Emir Süleyman of the impending attack.

At this point, it is worth pausing for a moment to discuss the *Ahval*'s reference to Süleyman conducting a land survey (*il yazmak*). The fact that it appears in a chronicle composed during the civil war or shortly thereafter makes it one of the first known references to an administrative practice that was already in effect at this time, which would eventually become one of the hallmarks of the classical Ottoman state. In fact, we know from a later *timar defteri* that Emir Süleyman carried out a distribution of *timar*s in Albania during the civil war.[23] Furthermore it is also known from the *Ottoman Anonymous Chronicles* that such land surveys (*taḥrīr*) were viewed with hostility by opponents of centralization, who correctly perceived them as the main instruments of the central state.[24] In a time when the collapse of Yıldırım Bayezid's empire had brought to the surface social tensions created by his imperial project, the mention of Emir Süleyman conducting a land survey would probably not have been lost on the *Ahval*'s intended audience, which seems to have included many people with such views. As with references to Süleyman's closeness to Çandarlı Ali Paşa and his courtly drinking parties, the chronicle's mention of a land survey probably had the effect of discrediting Emir Süleyman as a candidate for the throne, at least to those members of his audience. The *Ahval*'s heroic presentation of Mehmed makes it impossible to imagine him conducting such a survey.

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[23] Başbakanlık Arşivi, Maliyeden Müdevver 231. A *timar defteri* is a register listing *timar*s and their holders.

[24] *Ottoman Anonymous Chronicles*, 30; Bernard Lewis, ed. and tr., *Islam from the Prophet Muhammad to the Capture of Constantinople*, v. 1 (New York: Harper & Row, 1974), 139; Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds*, 110–112 *et passim*.

Returning now to our story, when Emir Süleyman found out that his brother was coming, he was supposedly alarmed because the size of his army was greatly reduced, and said that he would need to return to Rumeli to gather more troops in order to face him. But Ali Paşa reassured Süleyman by suggesting that they confront Mehmed in a place where the terrain would give them an advantage. The location of Çakır Pınarı near Yenişehir was chosen, and Süleyman sent scouts to the area under the command of Gazi Evrenos. As soon as they arrived, however, Evrenos' scouts were attacked by those of Mehmed. Despite Mehmed's initial advantage, he was unable to defeat Süleyman in the ensuing battle, which seems to have resembled a siege, since we are told that it lasted for an entire week.[25] The reasons given by the *Ahval* for Mehmed's failure are Süleyman's advantageous position, the weather, and another of Ali Paşa's ruses:

> When Emir Süleyman saw the Sultan's grandeur and strength, he was scared and turned his face to flee. As soon as Ali Paşa found out, by way of a ruse he wrote the Sultan a letter and had one of his servants deliver it to him. The letter said: "O Sultan of the World! Be informed that all the begs are making evil designs on you. They have come to an agreement with our side to hand you over. But they are not all of the same mind. Your father had bestowed many favors on me and I like you, so be informed! Now I have told you, so if something happens later on don't complain to me!"

Whatever we make of this story, one thing is clear: Mehmed lost the battle with Süleyman and was forced once again to return to Rum. It was defeats such as these that eventually forced Mehmed to make use of the double-edged sword of introducing yet another contender to the struggle for the Ottoman throne in the person of his brother Musa, whom he encouraged to cross to Rumeli. But before turning to that event, we must first examine the situation in Rumeli during this time.

The Situation in Rumeli (1403–1410)

The situation in Rumeli while Emir Süleyman was in Anatolia has been studied by Elizabeth Zachariadou, who has made the following general assessment:

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[25] OA, 81a–84a; Mz, 125–128.

> While in Anatolia, Süleyman on the whole maintained peace with the Christians in Rumili … Few clashes between Ottomans and Christians are reported in Rumili during the period 1403–1410. When one analyzes them, one can remark that Süleyman followed a standard policy: "intervention" in favour of a vassal or of a lord well-disposed towards the Ottomans at the expense of another who was less dependable. By applying this principle Süleyman was able to maintain the *status quo* in Rumili and claim annual tributes from disputed territories which passed from one Christian lord to another.[26]

As we will see, Süleyman's peaceful policies toward the Christians of Rumeli following the treaty of 1403, which continued during his absence in Anatolia, were probably largely responsible for the success of his younger brother and rival Musa. By 1409, Musa had gathered around himself many discontented raiders (*akıncı*) who sought to return to a more aggressive policy of raiding Christian territories for booty. While raiding in Rumeli did not cease entirely during the years 1403–1410, Zachariadou's assessment of the overall situation is accurate: there is little doubt that there was a significant decrease of raiding during Süleyman's reign, followed by a marked increase during the rise and short reign of Musa (1410–1413).

Let us now examine the situation in detail. As we saw above, according to Konstantin the Philosopher, after crossing the straits by March of 1404 and seizing Bursa and Ankara from his brother Mehmed Çelebi, Emir Süleyman briefly returned to Rumeli. It is worth taking a closer look at Konstantin's account in order to better understand the situation in Serbia, where, as in other parts of the Balkan Orthodox world, politics at this time were determined by the struggle between pro-Ottoman and pro-Catholic (i.e. pro-Hungarian) parties. As we saw in chapter 1, in the aftermath of the Battle of Ankara, George Branković and Stefan Lazarević had tried to take advantage of the situation to increase their land holdings at each other's expense. In this struggle George Branković had allied himself with Süleyman, who had provided him with troops, but the ensuing battle had resulted in a victory for Stefan. The final outcome of the whole affair was that Süleyman confirmed Stefan Lazarević's holdings and status as an Ottoman vassal in the Treaty of 1403.

Apart from George Branković, however, Stefan faced another adversary in the person of his brother Vuk Lazarević, who had also sought

[26] Zachariadou, "Süleyman Çelebi," 291–292.

to make gains by submitting to Süleyman in the aftermath of Ankara. According to Konstantin, before crossing to Anatolia on his first campaign, Süleyman had sent an ambassador to Stefan Lazarević to make peace with him. This is probably a reference to the treaty of 1403, but it is also possible that the two rulers followed it up with another document drawn up between the two of them. Be that as it may, Konstantin states that once Süleyman had established his power in Anatolia, he broke his treaty with Stefan. According to the chronicler, this was done at the instigation of Stefan Lazarević's brother Vuk, who demanded half of Stefan's territories.[27] Süleyman gave Vuk a large army under the command of Gazi Evrenos which crossed the straits and plundered Stefan's territory, leading eventually to full-blown civil war in Serbia. Vuk sent letters with promises and threats to Stefan's noblemen and was able to win many of them over to his side. In the end Stefan was forced to take refuge in Belgrade, where he enjoyed the protection of his Hungarian overlord Sigismund, while Vuk took control of the south as an Ottoman vassal.[28]

In the context of the war between the Lazarević brothers, Konstantin the Philosopher also informs us that certain towns had revolted against Ottoman rule "led by the sons of the Bulgarian kings."[29] Unfortunately, the chronicler doesn't provide much detail on these uprisings, except for the important fact that Süleyman was forced to return to Rumeli in person to quell them. Apparently one of the towns was Temska near Pirot, a town lying on the border between Bulgaria and Serbia; the location of the revolt should come as no suprise, since at this time the Bulgarian lands falling farther to the east were already thoroughly incorporated into the Ottoman state.[30] Konstantin states that Süleyman campaigned against Temska, and that while he was there he contacted Stefan Lazarević to inform him that he would be passing through his territory. These events must have taken place while the war between Stefan and Vuk Lazarević was still going on, for the chron-

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[27] On the conflict between Stefan and Vuk, see Constantin Jireček, *Geschichte der Serben*, v. 2 (Gotha: F.A. Perthes, 1918), 146 *et passim*.

[28] Konstantin the Philosopher, 26–29.

[29] Konstantin the Philosopher, 30.

[30] Temska was in the area controlled by Stratsimir prior to the Battle of Kosovo (1389). Stratsimir was the son of Bulgarian Tsar Ivan Aleksander (d. 1371) and the brother of Šišman, the last king of Bulgaria. See Machiel Kiel, "Mevlana Neşrī and the Towns of Medieval Bulgaria," *Studies in Ottoman History in Honour of Professor V.L. Ménage*, ed. Colin Heywood and Colin Imber (Istanbul: Isis, 1994), 165–187.

icler states that the land had not yet been divided. He also mentions an ally of Stefan named Karaljuk, "a raider living in the mountains" who came down and attacked Süleyman while he was camped by the river Toplica. Eventually the revolts were suppressed; the war between Stefan and Vuk ended with the division of Serbia between them; "there was a break from bloodshed … and King Süleyman campaigned in the East."[31] As we have seen, this is probably a reference to Süleyman's return to Anatolia in summer of 1405. Unfortunately, it is not possible to date any of these events with precision, since there are no sources for them apart from the chronicle of Konstantin the Philosopher. While it is true that Konstantin was writing more than twenty years after the events and was biased in favor of his patron Stefan Lazarević, he was also an eyewitness and is generally to be trusted as far as events in Rumeli are concerned. These include Süleyman's comings and goings to Anatolia, even if the chronicler was not always aware of the prince's activities once he had crossed to the other side of the straits.

After 1405 Süleyman was increasingly preoccupied with events in Anatolia, and while it cannot be ruled out that during this period he might have moved back and forth between Anatolia and Rumeli, he seems to have been based mostly in Bursa. This is apparent from the archives of the Venetian Senate, which have preserved ambassadorial instructions and other information pertaining to several embassies to Süleyman during the period 1406–1409.[32] From this information, several observations can be made about Süleyman's situation at this time. One is that from 1406, owing to Süleyman's expansion into Anatolia and his conquest of Bursa, the Venetians began calling him "Emperor of the Turks" (*imperator turchorum*), whereas before that they had referred to him simply as "Musulman Çalabi."[33] Another is that Süleyman's entanglement in Anatolia made him a poor negotiator, since affairs in Rumeli at this time appear to have been handled by the local *uc begleri*. Let us take a closer look at the situation.

During the years 1406–1409, Venice needed to negotiate with Süleyman on a number of issues. These included the status of Lepanto and the territories in Zeta that Venice had captured from Süleyman's vassal Balša III, and the return of Venetian subjects and goods captured

[31] Konstantin the Philosopher, 30.

[32] See Zachariadou, "Süleyman Çelebi," 291, note 102.

[33] Valentini, AAV 3: 359–364, 503, 508. This point was first made by Zachariadou, "Süleyman Çelebi," 291.

by the Ottomans both on land and at sea.[34] In 1405 Venice had added the Zetan towns of Antivari, Budua and Dulcigno to her older territories in Albania. But Venice's possession of these towns was not recognized by the local Ottoman commander, the *uc begi* of Üsküp (Skopje), Paşa Yigit, with whom the Venetians tried to negotiate directly. Venice would continue to negotiate with Paşa Yigit in the years to come, as part of a general policy of negotiating directly with local Ottoman commanders.[35] In this instance, however, Venice also continued to negotiate directly with Emir Süleyman, sending several ambassadors to his court. The first of these was Francesco Giustiniani, who was elected in January 1406, departed in March, and was still on his mission in June of the same year. It can be ascertained from the senate's records that on 4 March 1406 Süleyman was thought to be in Anatolia, for Giustiniani is called "electus ambaxiator in Turchiam." Apparently Giustiniani's embassy was not entirely successful, for the Republic soon sent another ambassador, Giovanni Loredan, who probably left Venice in March or April of 1407. In February 1407, the senate instructed Loredan "to go to the presence of the most Exalted and Magnificent lord Mussolaman Zalabi" by ship, disembarking "in the most convenient place that you can, from where it is easiest to go to his presence." It seems that at this time the Venetians were not sure exactly where Süleyman was. When he had reached "his Highness" (*celsitudinem suam*) Loredan was to congratulate Süleyman "on his felicitous successes…and great prosperity."[36] It is therefore clear that by 1407, the Venetians had heard of Süleyman's victories, and were following a policy of treating him as the undisputed heir to the Ottoman throne in the hope that he would be willing and able to settle their problems in Albania.

Süleyman may have been willing but was apparently unable to rein in his subjects in Rumeli. Indeed, it is something of a mystery who controlled affairs in Ottoman Rumeli during this time, since both Çandarlı Ali Paşa (d. December 1406) and the powerful *uc begi* Evrenos were with Süleyman in Anatolia. It would thus appear that Rumeli was being managed by the *uc begleri* referred to above, especially Paşa Yigit of Üsküp and Yusuf Beg of Tırhala.[37] Some insight into this situation

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[34] On Venice's conflict with Balša, see chapter 1.

[35] Zachariadou, "Süleyman Çelebi," 292–293; Valentini, AAV 3: 499, 501, 505–506. On the evolution of Venice's relationship with Paşa Yigit, see below, chapter 5.

[36] Valentini, AAV 5: 7–14.

[37] It is curious that until the final years of the civil war, there is no mention of the powerful *uc begi* Mihaloğlı Mehmed. Mihaloğlı would have been a natural choice for

may be provided by the Venetian-Ottoman conflict over Lepanto in 1407. In the words of Elizabeth Zachariadou, who has studied the conflict in detail:

> The Albanian lord of [Lepanto], Paul Spata, a vassal of the Ottomans, was attacked by Tocco, lord of Cephalonia. Spata appealed to the Ottoman governor of Thessaly, Yusuf beg, who first offered some aid but later made a treaty with Tocco. Spata, left without support, surrendered the fortress of Angelokastron to the Ottomans and himself went to Süleyman, apparently to offer him Lepanto. Venice was very vexed that this place—strategically and economically important—was to pass under Ottoman domination and proceeded to occupy it (June 1407) … Turco-Venetian relations were disturbed and the Turks inflicted damages upon Venetian merchants in those days.[38]

Despite another Venetian embassy to Süleyman under Petro Zeno which began in June 1408, the problem was not resolved and the Catholic archbishop of Patras was forced to surrender the city to Venice. The Ottomans in Rumeli threatened the Marquisate of Bodonitza, and raids were carried out against Venetian possessions in the Aegean, leading to the capture of property and merchants.[39] It is difficult to ascertain to what extent these actions were sanctioned by Süleyman or undertaken semi-independently by the local Ottoman raiders and their leaders. We have seen that Süleyman's overall policy was to preserve the peace in Rumeli while he was occupied in Anatolia, a policy that required making concessions both to his own subjects and to foreign powers in the region.

Despite the gradual souring of Ottoman-Venetian relations in 1407 and 1408, those relations were not disrupted entirely and diplomatic exchanges continued to be undertaken into the spring of 1409, when it was becoming clear that Süleyman's hold on the reins of power was slackening. In January of 1409, the Venetians were still trying to negotiate over Albania both with Süleyman and with Paşa Yigit, "a Turkish captain" who "we are informed … is with his men in the region of Skopia, and has great power with his lord the Turk."[40]

Süleyman to leave behind as his deputy in Rumeli, provided of course that his loyalty could be trusted. As we will see below, neither Musa nor Mehmed Çelebi trusted the loyalty of Mihaloğlı Mehmed.

[38] Zachariadou, "Süleyman Çelebi," 293.

[39] Zachariadou, "Süleyman Çelebi," 293–294.

[40] Valentini, AAV 5: 190–191. The editors have misread *pasayt* as Bayezid.

By March of the same year, the senate was advising its ambassador Francesco Giustiniani, who was preparing to visit Süleyman to give gifts and bribes (*manzarie*) not only to Süleyman, but also to his *baroni* "and anyone else with whom you see that you can best obtain what we intend," namely the protection of Venetian territory and commercial interests. Most importantly, in the same document the senate advised Giustiniani to look discreetly into the possibility of cooperating with Mehmed (*Chirici*) against Süleyman.[41] By this time, it was clear that Emir Süleyman was no longer the undisputed "Emperor of the Turks."

Musa Çelebi in Kastamonu and Karaman

The fact that in March 1409 the Venetian senate was considering cooperating with Mehmed but still made no mention of Musa strongly suggests that at that time, Musa had not yet entered Süleyman's realm in Rumeli, or that if he had, news of the event had not yet reached Venice. Whether as an independent actor or as Mehmed's agent, Musa's appearance in Rumeli probably dates to 1409 and to the intensification of Mehmed and Süleyman's struggle in Anatolia, to which the Venetian senate alludes. Şehabeddin Tekindağ has stated that Musa crossed from Sinop to Wallachia in July of 1409, but has provided no proof for his allegation.[42] Others have claimed that he crossed sooner. According to Nicholae Iorga, an inscription on a church in the village of Elchani near Ochrid refers to Musa as ruling the area in the Byzantine year 6916 (1407–1408); however the inscription in question simply mentions a "Çelebi" (Τζαλαπί) and does not constitute proof that Musa was active in the Balkans as far south as Ochrid as early as 1407–1408.[43] Needless to say, the fact that Musa was not yet in Rumeli prior to 1409 does not necessarily mean that he was not already making plans to go there.

Musa's career before 1409 is not well known. As we have seen, when Timur departed from Anatolia in the spring of 1403, Musa came under the custody of his older brother Mehmed. After that event he disap-

[41] Valentini, AAV 5: 215–230; also summarized in Iorga, ROL, 301–303.

[42] M.C. Şehabeddin Tekindağ, "Mûsâ Çelebî," İA.

[43] Nicholae Iorga, "Une inscription grecque sous le Sultan Mousa, 1407–1408, dans la région d'Ochrida," *Revue Historique du Sud-Est Européen*, 10 (1933): 11–12.

pears from the chronicles for a few years, reappearing in the *Ahval* at some undetermined point during Süleyman's long stay in Anatolia, when we are told that he left Mehmed's court and made contact with the *beylik*s of İsfendiyar and Karaman. The context for this event is the stalemate between Süleyman and Mehmed. According to our source, after Süleyman's conquest of Bursa, Mehmed is confined to Rum and unable to recapture any territory from his older brother. At that point, Musa appears before Mehmed and asks him for permission to go to Rumeli with İsfendiyar's assistance to "become a *beg* there." In so doing he would create a diversion, luring Süleyman away from Anatolia for long enough to allow Mehmed to retake it. That way Mehmed would become once again the undisputed Ottoman ruler of Anatolia, and possibly also Rumeli, for if Musa should succeed in becoming ruler of that province he would rule there as Mehmed's vassal, striking coins and having Friday sermons delivered in his name. After hearing these words, Mehmed agrees and the brothers seal their agreement with an oath.[44] As we will see, such an oath suits the narrative goals of the *Ahval* rather well, since Musa's treachery subsequently justifies Mehmed's invasion of Rumeli. If it existed, such an oath would probably look rather like the one binding Mehmed himself to Yakub of Germiyan (see above). Oath or no oath, the fact is that Mehmed had an obvious interest in creating a diversion at a time when he was unable to retake Bursa from Süleyman, and Musa was happy to oblige.

It is unclear for how long Musa was in Anatolia before crossing to Rumeli. The *Ahval* mentions a first visit to Kastamonu, during which Musa was well received by İsfendiyar but "was unable to voice his desire."[45] This was supposedly followed by a visit to Karaman, whose ruler also treated Musa well "despite Emir Süleyman." According to our source, Musa was still in Karaman when an embassy arrived in Kastamonu from the Wallachian *voivoda* Mircea, who asked İsfendiyar to send Musa to Wallachia, promising to give the Ottoman prince his daughter's hand in marriage "and make him a *beg* there." İsfendiyar sent Mircea's embassy on to Karaman, where they found Musa, who accepted Mircea's invitation, saying, "That was the goal all along!" Then Mircea's embassy returned with Musa to Kastamonu, İsfendiyar

[44] OA, 85b–86a; Mz 129.
[45] OA, 86a–86b; Mz 129: *ol murādın dahı dile getürmeyüp*.

boarded them on a ship at Sinop, and they crossed the Black Sea to Wallachia.[46]

Musa's movements back and forth between Kastamonu and Karaman do not serve any obvious ulterior narrative goal in our source, and must therefore reflect the Ottoman prince's real actions at the time. Why otherwise would the author of the *Ahval* have chosen to complicate his narrative unnecessarily, when he could just as easily have left out the role of Karaman, as other chroniclers have done? Once we have accepted that there is probably some truth to the *Ahval*'s overall version of these events, there arises the question of the purpose served by Musa's visits to Kastamonu and Karaman. The obvious answer is that those visits reflected diplomatic deliberations and realignments involving Musa, Mircea, İsfendiyar, Karaman, and probably also Mehmed, who had released Musa for his own benefit and had an interest in his successful crossing to Rumeli. In fact, the animosity that had existed between Mehmed and İsfendiyar in the early years of the civil war may have been the cause of İsfendiyar's initial refusal to help Musa. As has been suggested, the proximity of Mehmed's base to Kastamonu meant that İsfendiyar had every reason to perceive Mehmed as a threat, and it must have been clear to him that if Musa succeeded in drawing Süleyman out of Anatolia, Mehmed's power there would grow. As for the Karamanids, we have seen that they probably perceived Süleyman as the greater threat, making an alliance with Mehmed and Musa quite natural. It is in that context that we should understand the chronicle's statement that the Karamanids welcomed Musa "despite Emir Süleyman," who would obviously see Karaman's harboring of a rival Ottoman prince as a *casus belli*.

The *Ahval* is not the only Ottoman chronicle to allude to this complicated situation. The chronicle of Aşıkpaşazade contains a passage that can be translated as follows:

> Emir Süleyman sent an ambassador to Karaman-oğlı and Germiyan-oğlı [saying] "don't let my brother Musa go, and I will be very friendly toward you." Musa found out that his brother had made peace with the Karamanid ruler, and escaped to İsfendiyar. Emir Süleyman was in Bursa. He heard that Musa had gone to İsfendiyar and marched on him until he reached Göynük, where he camped on the banks of a river. At that time it was summer; winter came, and he wintered there.

[46] OA, 86b–87a; Mz 130.

> He never left that position, which was known thereafter as *Beg Kavağı* ("the beg's poplar") because Emir Süleyman was always conversing and making merry under a poplar tree there. Then Süleyman and İsfendiyar made peace, and (Süleyman) left that place and reached İznik, where he occupied himself with merrymaking once again, drinking Ali Paşa's free wine. İsfendiyar put Musa in a ship at Sinop and sent him to Wallachia.[47]

While this passage shows some minor divergence from the *Ahval*'s account, it is obviously referring to the same events. Moreover, the fact that Aşıkpaşazade's passage is written from the perspective of someone in Süleyman's camp makes it a valuable complement to the *Ahval*'s account, which reflects the perspective of Mehmed and Musa. When the two accounts are placed side by side, a coherent and previously unknown international situation begins to emerge. After being released by his brother Mehmed, Musa did not cross immediately from Kastamonu to Wallachia. Instead, he spent a fairly long period of time (perhaps several months) in Anatolia, where he was supported by Karaman, İsfendiyar, and perhaps also Germiyan. During this time, Emir Süleyman was well aware of the threat posed by his brother and attempted by means of campaigns and treaties to persuade the rulers of those *beylik*s to hand him over. First he made peace with Germiyan and Karaman, and Musa had to escape to Kastamonu. Then Süleyman campaigned against Kastamonu. Apparently the campaign was long and inconclusive, for Süleyman was forced to stay until winter in Göynük. Finally he made peace with İsfendiyar; but by that time Musa had arranged to cross to Wallachia in the company of Mircea's ambassadors.

In the absence of documentary sources, it is impossible to assign dates to Musa's movements or to reconstruct these events in an entirely satisfactory manner. Nevertheless, the preceding discussion is at least sufficient to give a fair idea of the complex negotiations that led to Musa's crossing to Wallachia. Most modern scholarship has failed to take this complexity fully into account, stating simply that Mehmed released Musa, who then crossed to Wallachia from Sinop with the assistance of İsfendiyar. An exception to this rule is a relatively obscure article by Alexandrescu-Dersca on the question of Mircea's relations with Musa.[48] The main thesis of that article is that Musa's crossing to Wallachia was the outcome of an alliance between Mircea and the

[47] Aşıkpaşazade, 73.

[48] M.M. Alexandrescu-Dersca Bulgaru, "Les relations du prince de valachie Mircea

*beylik*s of Kastamonu and Karaman against Emir Süleyman. According to Alexandrescu, after Süleyman moved his operations to Bursa, he began to exert an increasing amount of pressure on the Anatolian *beylik*s, while at the same time giving free rein to the *uc begleri* and *akıncı* of Rumeli to carry out raids against Wallachia.

The situation in Wallachia will be discussed in the next chapter, which deals with Musa's actions after he crossed to Rumeli. As far as the *beylik*s of Anatolia and their alleged alliance with Mircea is concerned, we have seen that Alexandrescu's thesis is borne out by the *Ahval* and Aşıkpaşazade. But the most interesting part of Alexandrescu's article is the claim that the alliances that came into play at this time around the person of Musa can in fact be traced back to the reign of Yıldırım Bayezid. The author bases this conclusion on the later Ottoman chronicles of Sa'deddin and İdris Bitlisi. These chronicles relate that after Bayezid's occupation of Kastamonu in 1391, the dispossessed sons of Menteşe, Aydın and Saruhan took refuge with İsfendiyar's father Kötürüm Bayezid in Sinop, where they formed an alliance with the Wallachian ruler Mircea and persuaded him to invade Ottoman territory in Rumeli, resulting in the Battle of Rovine or Argeş (17 May 1395).[49]

There are some problems with Alexandrescu's account of these events. First of all, Kötürüm Bayezid died in 1385, and upon his death Sinop was inherited by his son İsfendiyar, who was the ruler of that town in 1391.[50] Secondly, Mircea appears to have had reasons of his own for invading Bayezid's territory at the time, such as retaliation for the Ottoman raids into his own territory under Firuz Beg.[51] Despite these problems, however, it is still worth bearing in mind that some kind of alliance may have existed already between Mircea and İsfendiyar prior to the Battle of Ankara. It should be noted, too, that the İsfendiyar-Mircea connection is one that appears again after the end of the civil war, when both the rebel Şeyh Bedreddin and the Ottoman prince Mustafa also used the Black Sea port of Sinop to cross to Wallachia. One thing is clear: whatever the precise actions and alliances of the

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l'ancien avec les émirs seldjoukides d'anatolie et leur candidat Musa au trône Ottoman," *Tarih Arastirmalari Dergisi* 6, no. 10–11 (1968): 113–125.

[49] Alexandrescu-Dersca, "Les relations," 116.

[50] See Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Tarihi* 1: 84; *idem*, *Anadolu Beylikleri*, 127–129.

[51] See İsmail Hami Danişmend, *İzahlı Osmanlı Tarihi Kronolojisi* (Istanbul: Türkiye Yayınevi, 1947), 96. It is extremely unlikely that these events took place in 1390, as the author suggests.

Anatolian *beylik*s leading up to Musa's crossing to Wallachia, the Wallachian ruler Mircea was involved even before Musa set foot on European soil. In the next chapter, we will study Musa's actions after he arrived there.

CHAPTER FOUR

RUMELİ BETWEEN EMİR SÜLEYMAN AND MUSA ÇELEBİ (1409? – 17 FEBRUARY 1411)

In the last chapter we saw that after Emir Süleyman took Bursa in 1403–1404, he was based mostly in Anatolia, where he tried to regain territory from the *beyliks* and his brother Mehmed. In the end, Mehmed was able to free himself from Süleyman's presence by introducing Musa Çelebi as another contender to the Ottoman succession struggle. Musa was sent to Rumeli as a diversion in order to draw Süleyman away from Anatolia. While it is uncertain exactly when Musa was released, it seems that he first spent some time in Kastamonu and Karaman, eventually crossing from Sinop to Wallachia with the aid of İsfendiyar and the Wallachian *voyvoda* Mircea. As we will see in a moment, there is also evidence that the Byzantine Emperor Manuel II Palaiologos was involved in the plot to bring Musa to Rumeli.

While the timing of Musa's crossing to Wallachia is unknown, his first activities in Rumeli took place after September of 1409.[1] It is therefore most likely that he arrived in Wallachia shortly before that time. While Alexandrescu has suggested that Musa was in Wallachia as early as 1406, there is little evidence to support this assertion.[2] As we will see, Süleyman did not return to Rumeli until June of 1410; had Musa

[1] In a laudatory oration to Manuel Palaiologos written to celebrate the Emperor's return to Constantinople after a visit to Thessaloniki in January of 1409, Ioannes Chortasmenos refers to a new impending conflict between the Ottoman princes. See Ioannes Chortasmenos, *Johannes Chortasmenos* (ca. 1370 – ca. 1436/37): *Briefe, Gedichte und Kleine Schriften*, ed. Herbert Hunger (Vienna: *Wiener byzantinische Studien* Bd. 7, 1969), 219. For the dating of Manuel Palaiologos' visit to Thessaloniki, see Nicolas Oikonomides, ed., *Actes de Docheiariou* (Paris: P. Lethielleux, 1984), 21, 269–271, 279–285.

[2] See Alexandrescu, "Les relations," 116. İnalcık, "Meḥemmed I," 974 has followed Alexandrescu, who cites Joseph von Hammer and the Rumanian scholars M. Guboglu and Mustafa Mehmet. However these are as the only scholars who have adopted the date of 1406 for Musa's crossing to Wallachia. As for her evidence, it is based on the situation in Wallachia around 1406. But the fact that Mircea may have sought a solution to his problems with the Ottomans at that time does not mean that he actually succeeded in bringing Musa there that early.

been in Wallachia already in 1406, it is likely that Süleyman would have reacted to his presence there sooner. Moreover, one would have expected to find references to Musa's presence in various documentary sources, which are in fact totally lacking. Of course it is not impossible that Musa might have been held as a "guest" of Mircea in Wallachia for several years, but there is no way of knowing this.

We saw in the last chapter that while Süleyman was campaigning in Anatolia, he sought to preserve the *status quo* in Rumeli by maintaining peaceful relations with the Christian powers there. However, the same did not hold true for the Christian powers in question, which naturally perceived Süleyman's expansion into Anatolia as a threat. After 1404, it seemed probable that Süleyman might eventually defeat his rival Mehmed Çelebi and reunite his father's realm under his rule, leading to a revival of Ottoman power in the region. From the perspective of the Ottomans' enemies such an event had to be avoided at all costs. For that reason, during Süleyman's absence from Rumeli several Christian rulers there sought to cooperate against him. While the sources are not entirely adequate for a detailed reconstruction of those alliances, they do provide evidence that suggests common action on the part of Byzantium, Wallachia, Hungary, and other powers. Furthermore, they suggest that the Byzantine Emperor Manuel II Palaiologos may have supported Musa during his rise, an idea that has been overshadowed in the literature by Musa's subsequent career, wich involved many violent attacks against Byzantine territory.[3]

Apart from Wallachia and Byzantium, the Turkish raiders (*akıncı*) and provincial cavalry (*sipāhī*) of Rumeli also played an essential part in Musa's rise to power. These people were displeased with Süleyman's peaceful policies toward the Christians, which had robbed them of their livelihood. As we saw in the last chapter, while Süleyman was preoccupied in Anatolia, limited raids were carried out by local *uc begleri* and *akıncı* against Venetian interests in Albania and Greece. While our sources on the eastern Balkans are more scarce, they are sufficient to suggest that such raids also took place against Wallachian territory. As we saw in chapter 1, around the time of the Battle of Ankara Mircea may have already regained his old territories in the Dobrudja (Deliorman) region across the Danube, which Süleyman had granted him in exchange for the payment of a tribute. But the Dobrudja was home to

[3] See chapter 5.

one of the largest populations of Turkish raiders in the Balkans, who were unlikely to accept the return of their region to Christian hands.[4] There is evidence of struggles between Mircea and the *akıncı* in the period 1403–1408, which must have provided an additional motive for Mircea to support Musa in order to divert the attention of the *akıncı* away from his own region. In order to understand Musa's rise to power in Rumeli, it is necessary to study this situation in further detail.

Musa's First Supporters in Rumeli: Mircea, Byzantium, and the Akıncı

As has already been stated, our sources on Rumeli and Wallachia for the period 1404–1409 are too sporadic and insufficient for a proper reconstruction of the situation leading to the rise of Musa. Nevertheless an attempt at reconstruction is necessary, since both in Anatolia and in Rumeli this period constitutes a bridge between the early and late phases of the civil war, without which the course and outcome of the entire succession struggle cannot be properly understood. Fortunately, some solid evidence is available: this includes passages from the correspondence of King Sigismund of Hungary, an oration by Archbishop Symeon of Thessaloniki, various chronicles, and an inscription.

Let us begin our investigation with a brief passage from a letter sent by King Sigismund of Hungary to the Duke of Burgundy in 1404:

> Be informed that certain agreements have been concluded between myself and my brother Wenceslas, King of the Romans and of Bohemia; that I have made peace and an alliance with Ostoja, the King of Bosnia, and turned Stefan [Lazarević] the Duke of Rascia into my vassal; and that I have applied great force against the Turks and reported some victories, sending strong auxiliary forces to join the Emperor of Constantinople and the Voyvoda of Wallachia in carrying out some noble deeds against them.[5]

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[4] On the geography and history of the Dobrudja region, see O. Tafrali, *La Roumanie Transdanubienne (La Dobroudja): Esquisse géographique, historique, ethnographique et économique* (Paris: E. Leroux, 1918). This book includes a very useful map showing the ethnic distribution ca. 1913, from which the solid Turkish-Tatar presence in the southern region known as Deliorman is apparent.

[5] Eudoxiu de Hurmuzaki, *Documente privitoare la Istoria Românilor* (Bucharest: C. Göbl, 1890), 429, doc. ccccliii. My translation. See also Alexandrescu, "Les relations du prince de Valachie," 115. Since this is a rare publication, I am also providing the original text: *Noueritis, inter me ac fratrem meum Venceslaum, Romanorum et Bohemiae Regem, certas quasdam pactiones esse factas; me cum Ostoja, Rege Bosnae, pacem ac foedus inisse, Stephanum, Ducem*

The mention of Sigismund's alliances and of the Hungarian vassalage of Stefan Lazarević leaves little doubt about the correct dating of the above letter.[6] It is obvious that as early as 1404, Süleyman's Christian enemies in Rumeli were making plans and carrying out joint military actions against him. Unfortunately, nothing more is known about the specific campaigns to which Sigismund refers. The mention of Mircea and especially of Byzantine Emperor Manuel II Palaiologos is intriguing, since at the time both rulers supposedly had treaties with Süleyman. Needless to say, such treaties were easily made and broken when the political calculus demanded it. Neither Mircea nor Manuel had any love for the Ottomans, and Manuel especially had made it his life's goal to confront the Turkish threat by whatever means possible, a policy that had led him to form alliances with Christian powers as distant as England.[7]

While we are still on the topic of Manuel Palaiologos' relations with Mircea, it should be pointed out that the Archbishop Symeon of Thessaloniki, who was writing in 1427 or 1428, suggested in no uncertain terms that Manuel had played a part in Mircea's plot to bring Musa to Rumeli. As we saw in the introduction, the passage in question is part of a long historical oration dealing with many of the events of the Ottoman civil war, which were probably experienced by Symeon in person in Constantinople prior to assuming his position in Thessaloniki.[8] His words therefore carry special weight, and are as follows:

> Not long after that, another evil spawn of that deadly viper, that Payiazit [Bayezid], rose up against us. He was the infidel Moses [Musa], whom the pious *basileus* [emperor] Manuel invited and honored with much attention, providing him with copious provisions and competent aides and ferrying him across to Wallachia. He took refuge there with the assistance of the local Christian ethnarch, who, conforming with the royal orders, cared for that snake during the winter, who after creeping out of poverty and receiving sufficient warmth from Christians, gaining from them even the power to rule, attacked us Christians violently and murderously.[9]

Rasciae, mihi se subiecisse; et contra Turcos magna potentia profectum, victorias aliquas reportasse, Constantinopolitanum Imperatorem ac Vaiuodam Valachiae contra eosdem Turcos pulchra facinora gerere, meque illis magna misisse auxilia.

[6] The Bosnian king Ostoja accepted Sigismund's suzerainty in late 1403. See Fine, *Late Medieval Balkans*, 461–462.

[7] See Barker, *Manuel II Palaeologus*, 177–181.

[8] Balfour, *Symeon*, 119.

[9] *Symeon*, 48.

Coming as it does from a contemporary Byzantine observer, this text strongly suggests that Manuel was somehow involved in the plan to bring Musa to Rumeli. This idea is also supported by a Byzantine short chronicle, which states that in January of 1410 "Musa came from the land of the Tatars and subjected himself (*ἐδουλώθη*) to the *basileus* Kyr [lord] Manuel."[10] The chronicle's editor Peter Schreiner has dismissed this information as "nearly euphemistic," since it comes just before a description of the Battle of Kosmidion in which Byzantium supported Süleyman; moreover, as we will see, by that time Musa had already attacked Byzantine Mesembria. Schreiner's reservations notwithstanding, however, the fact that Symeon also refers to a close initial relationship between Byzantium and Musa suggests that there may be more to the cryptic short chronicle than meets the eye. Like Schreiner, Symeon's editor David Balfour has also dismissed the archbishop's allegation that Manuel was behind Mircea's support of Musa, attributing it to his "imperialist prejudice."[11] However, it must be remembered that following the Battle of Ankara, Christian states in the Balkans such as Byzantium, Hungary and Wallachia had the upper hand. As Alexandrescu has pointed out, by February of 1403 Manuel was already consulting with Mircea and other Christian leaders in the Balkans about how best to take advantage of the situation created by the Ottoman defeat.

Furthermore, as we will see below, there are further hints in sources dating from 1410 of a collaboration between Mircea and Manuel, which aimed to pit Musa and Süleyman against each other in order to destroy Ottoman power in Rumeli. Although in the fall of 1403 Mircea had probably signed a peace treaty with Süleyman, by 1404 there had already been hostilities between the Ottomans and the Wallachians. It is certain that by 1406, if not sooner, Mircea's territory had expanded into the Dobruja and its main city Silistria. As Alexandrescu has pointed out, from that year onward the Wallachian ruler began calling himself sovereign of all the lower Danube region as far as the Black Sea (including the Dobruja) and lord of Silistria.[12] That Mircea's titles were not just hollow claims is supported by a Greek inscription that used to belong to the fortifications of Silistria. According to P. Ş. Năsturel, who reconstructed this badly damaged inscription, it refers to a battle or siege in which Mircea saved the city from an adversary, who could

[10] Schreiner, *Kleinchroniken*, 1: 97; 2: 397.
[11] For Balfour's analysis of the passage, see *Symeon*, 123–124.
[12] Alexandrescu, "Les relations du prince de Valachie," 115.

at that time have only been Ottoman.[13] Năsturel claims that Mircea was able to defend the city successfully against an Ottoman attack, and recorded his victory with the inscription which must have originally been placed above one of the gates to the city. Although Zachariadou has cast doubt on the historical value of this inscription owing to the fact that it is badly damaged, the date is clearly legible as 6916 (1 September 1407 – 31 August 1408) and Năsturel's reconstruction is convincing given the context that we have just seen.[14]

The idea that Mircea's support of Musa was the outcome of his struggles with the Ottomans in the Dobrudja is also supported by Ottoman sources. The *Ahval* states that Mircea had suffered a great deal from the raids of the *akıncı* and thought that he would gain peace by supporting Musa against Süleyman:

> While Musa Çelebi was staying there in Karaman … the infidel ruler of Wallachia had become exhausted from the raids of the *akıncı* of Rumeli. Because he no longer had any peace of mind, his *begs* thought up a plan to write a letter to İsfendiyar and send a man to him demanding Musa Çelebi. Musa Çelebi would be brought back, and he would give him his own daughter and make him lord of the land of Wallachia. In that way, he would be saved from the hands of the Muslims.[15]

The idea that Mircea had suffered from Ottoman attacks under Süleyman is not confined to the *Ahval*. Konstantin the Philosopher also states that Mircea helped Musa "in order to avenge what his brother [Süleyman] had done to him."[16] Mircea's reasoning may appear paradoxical at first, since as we will see in a moment, the same *akıncı* whose attacks he was trying to escape also played an essential part in Musa's rise to power, and Musa's reign was characterized by a great rise in raiding activity. In fact, Mircea must have known that the *akıncı* could not be appeased, since raiding was their *raison d'être*, but that his only hope was to direct their energies away from his own territory and against that of others. As we will see, Musa's first actions in Rumeli were directed against Byzantium, and his brief reign was characterized by all-out attacks on Byzantine and Serbian territory. It would thus appear

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[13] P.Ş. Năsturel, "Une victoire du Voévode Mircea l'Ancien sur les Turcs devant Silistria (c. 1407–1408)," *Studia et Acta Orientalia* I (1957): 239–247. On Mircea's reconquest of Silistria and the Dobrudja, see also Alexandrescu, "Les relations," 115–118.

[14] For Zachariadou's criticism, see "Süleyman Çelebi," 295.

[15] OA, 86b; Mz, 130.

[16] Konstantin the Philosopher, 30.

that in addition to cooperating with the Byzantine Emperor in a plan to weaken and eventually destroy the Ottomans by pitting them against each other, Mircea was also thinking of his own personal gain in the shorter term.

We have seen that according to the *Ahval*, as soon as Musa arrived in Wallachia, he sealed his alliance with Mircea by marrying his daughter. Such a marriage is perfectly plausible. It was not at all unusual in early Ottoman history for Ottoman rulers to conclude agreements with the leaders of Christian states by marrying their daughters.[17] As we will see below, around the same time as Musa supposedly married Mircea's daughter, Emir Süleyman also allegedly married a granddaughter of his ally, the Byzantine Emperor Manuel II; furthermore, as we will see in the next chapter, later in his reign Musa married another Christian princess, an illegitimate daughter of Carlo Tocco of Cephalonia.[18] The first marriage does not exclude the second one of course, since Musa may have had more than one wife at the same time.

Let us now turn to the question of Musa Çelebi's Ottoman supporters. According to Aşıkpaşazade, when Musa crossed the Danube and entered Ottoman territory, he was joined there by "all the *tovıca* and timariots (*tīmār erleri*) of Rumeli," who accompanied him on his march to Edirne.[19] The first question that arises is that of the identity of these *tovıca* who supported Musa. In the words of Halil İnalcık, the "*tovadj̲ı* (also written as *tovid̲ja*, *tovid̲ji*, *tofud̲ja*, *tavadj̲ı*) were officers of the *aḳındj̲ıs*, raiders on the frontiers, who enjoyed *tīmārs* as ordinary *sipāhīs* and in many respects … were treated as *tīmār*-holding *sipāhīs*."[20] The chronicle of Tursun Beg also states that the *tovıca* were leaders of the *akıncı*.[21] Konstantin the Philosopher corroborates Aşıkpaşazade's idea that Musa was supported by the *akıncı*, stating that Musa "had gathered with him an enormous number of warriors, above all of the raider vari-

[17] The second Ottoman ruler Orhan Gazi is known to have made at least two such marriages, one of them with the daughter of John Kantakouzenos. See Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds*, 71, 129, 169–170.

[18] See below, chapter 5.

[19] Aşıkpaşazade, 73.

[20] Halil İnalcık, "Notes on N. Beldiceanu's Translation of the *Ḳanūnnāme*, fonds turc ancien 39, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris," *Der Islam* 43 (1967): 139–157. The *tovıca* are not to be confused with the *taycı* studied by Halime Doğru, who were a tax-exempt group responsible for taking care of the sultan's horses (*ṭay*=colt). See Halime Doğru, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğunda Yaya-Müsellem-Taycı Teşkilatı: XV. ve XVI. Yüzyılda Sultanönü Sancağı* (Istanbul: Eren, 1990).

[21] See Tursun Beg, *The History of Mehmed the Conqueror*, 41.

ety."[22] Finally, Doukas relates that Musa "assembled the Turks from the regions of the Danube, and they proclaimed him ruler of all Thrace, Thessaly and Illyricum." Meanwhile, he also "never ceased writing to the nobles promising them every advantage if he became ruler."[23] It is thus clear that apart from timariots and raiders, Musa also needed the support of at least some of the *uc begleri* of Rumeli. In fact, Aşıkpaşazade even states that it was the *uc begleri* who invited Musa in the first place. The passage reads as follows: "the *beg*s of Rumeli learned that Musa had come to Wallachia and sent word to him, saying 'come, your brother is unable to appreciate rulership. Day and night he has time for nothing but merrymaking.' When Musa heard the news, he rode and came to Silistria, where he crossed [the Danube]."[24]

Now that we have gained some understanding of who Musa's early supporters were, it is time to study the first actions by which he proclaimed his political ambitions to his brother Süleyman and the other powers of Rumeli.

Musa's First Actions in Rumeli: the Siege of Mesembria and the Battle of Yambol

Once he crossed the Danube, Musa was able to seize control of Rumeli from his brother Süleyman with relative ease. In the words of the *Ahval*, "when Musa Çelebi became a *beg* in Wallachia, in a short time he appeared in Rumeli, conquered all of it, and became a *beg* there."[25] Doukas also writes that "when the satraps of the West and the guardians of the Danubian regions learned of Musa's entry into Vlachia, they wrote to apprise Süleyman of the fact. They warned him that if he delayed going to the area of Thrace, Musa would surely take possession of the West while he, by staying on in Asia, would be confined, in the end, in Asia."[26]

Musa's target was not only Süleyman's army and administration, but his whole regime in Rumeli, which included the Christian powers to which Süleyman had made concessions in 1403. Thus, despite

[22] Konstantin the Philosopher, 31.
[23] Doukas, 19:2.
[24] Aşıkpaşazade, 73.
[25] OA, 87a; Mz, 130.
[26] Doukas 19:1.

Manuel II's apparent support of Musa's bid for power, a Byzantine short chronicle informs us that sometime between September 1409 and January 1410 Musa and his army raided Byzantine territory and blockaded Mesembria, the most important town in the Black Sea coastal region that Süleyman had ceded to Byzantium in the treaty of 1403.[27] The discontented *akıncı* had finally found their leader, and were reclaiming with zeal their right to raid the lands of the Christians. However, Mircea's role in these operations should also not be underestimated: according to the Byzantine chronicler Chalkokondyles, Musa promised Mircea land in exchange for his support, and was accompanied on some of his campaigns by Mircea's son Dan.[28] Apparently Mircea also had designs against the Byzantines, perhaps because Manuel had supported an obscure pretender to the Wallachian throne, as Chalkokondyles claims.[29]

Konstantin the Philosopher presents Musa's seizure of Rumeli as a gradual process of winning over its leaders and factions. According to Konstantin, Musa's first action was to seize Süleyman's governor Saruca Paşa "in a place called Dubulin."[30] This place is in fact Yambol (Diampolis 〉 Dubulin), and the event to which Konstantin is referring was the first major confrontation between Musa and Süleyman's armies. A Byzantine short chronicle confirms Konstantin's account, telling us that the event in question took place on 13 February 1410. The chronicle states that "in 6918 (1410) the brother of Emir Süleyman Beg, Musa Beg, came from Wallachia, while Voyvoda Mircea was ruling there, and snatched Saruca Paşa in Diampolis, on the thirteenth day of the month of February, a Friday. And he was recognized as ruler by the castles of Romania and all the land."[31] What happened at Yambol on 13 February 1410 was probably some sort of military confrontation in which Saruca Paşa was captured; the word used in the short chronicle for what Musa did to Saruca Paşa is *ἐτζάκωσεν* ('caught, snatched up'), which is very close to *ἐτζάκισεν* ('crushed, defeated militarily'), a word that appears in the next entry of the same chronicle in reference to the Battle of Kosmidion.

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[27] Schreiner, *Kleinchroniken*, I, 215.

[28] Chalkokondyles (ed. Darkò), 160–161.

[29] Chalkokondyles, 160; Alexandrescu, *"Les relations*," 120.

[30] Konstantin the Philosopher, 31.

[31] Schreiner, *Kleinchroniken*, I, 636; II, 395–396. Saruca Paşa also appears earlier in Konstantin's chronicle, where he destroys a division of Stefan Lazarević's army near Edirne on its return from the Battle of Ankara. See Konstantin, 21.

According to Konstantin, by taking Saruca with him Musa was able to enter Edirne. Konstantin states that shortly thereafter Musa captured Gallipoli, where he killed Saruca. Meanwhile, he was trying to persuade Süleyman's remaining vassals and governors to recognize his rule by writing letters, taking oaths and making promises, while at the same time winning over the remaining warriors and raiders of Rumeli.[32] The outcome of all this was that Musa was able in a short time to seize Rumeli from Süleyman, and by occupying Gallipoli where the few Ottoman ships were docked, to make it impossible for his brother to cross the straits there.

Konstantin informs us that Musa promised Serbia to Stefan Lazarević in exchange for his support, but made the same promise to Stefan's brother and rival Vuk as well as to the nephews of both brothers. The chronicler suggests that Musa's promises were false, and that he was really a wolf in a lamb's skin. He states that "[Musa] showed himself upon first appearance to the entire population in the neighboring regions as mild and liberal, as if he wanted, as a model of piety, to pacify [the country.] Later, however, he showed himself to all those [people] to be more bitter than gall, even to those who had served him."[33] To demonstrate Musa's true nature and the way in which he tried to deceive Stefan Lazarević and others, Konstantin tells of how Stefan, afraid of being deceived, asked for the help of certain *voivoda* named Vitko, "a sensible man who had a sharp eye for all things." Vitko refused to accept the empty promises of Musa's men, who would not swear to them before him, but asked to see the Ottoman ruler himself and accepted his offer only after one of his own men who knew Turkish had checked its wording to make sure that it was in order.[34]

Süleyman's Return to Rumeli and the International Situation

While Musa was gradually taking over Rumeli, Süleyman was apprised of his brother's activities and returned to Rumeli to face him before it was too late. Doukas states that he took Cüneyd with him, appointing another governor to Ephesus, and that he first stopped by Lampsakos across from Gallipoli, where he paid a Genoese nobleman for building

[32] Konstantin the Philosopher, 31.
[33] Konstantin the Philosopher, 31.
[34] Konstantin the Philosopher, 32.

him a tower there.[35] The tower must have been intended to assure Süleyman control of the straits at Gallipoli. But as we have seen, according to Konstantin the Philosopher, Musa had already succeeded in capturing the strategic harbor town, and Süleyman was forced to cross at Chalkedon across from Constantinople on Byzantine ships.[36]

It must be emphasized that although the Byzantine Emperor Manuel II eventually helped Süleyman to cross the straits and renewed his alliance with him, that was not his original intention. The Venetian archives preserve a copy of a response sent by the Venetian Senate to an embassy by Manuel, in which the emperor had proposed an anti-Turkish alliance to the Republic.[37] According to this document, which is dated 10 January 1410, Manuel had informed Venice that the time was ripe for a decisive strike against the Ottomans because of the ongoing conflict between "those two brothers, who are rulers of the Turks." Manuel urged the Venetians to send him eight galleys, which together with two of his own could block the straits "in order to obstruct transit from Turkey to Greece and vice versa, [and thereby] doom them." If the Venetians decided to help him, Manuel was sure that other Christian rulers in the area would follow; but if he did not receive assistance, he would have no other choice but to make peace with the Ottomans. At this point, one may wonder exactly who is meant by "those two brothers who are rulers of the Turks." It is obvious that one of them must be Süleyman, who was (as far as we know) the only Ottoman prince trying to cross from Asia to Europe at this time. The other brother is probably Musa, but could also be Mehmed. As we have seen, the Venetians had mentioned Mehmed as a rival of Süleyman the year before.[38] Whatever the case, in the end the Venetians politely refused Manuel's proposal, saying that he should first secure the

[35] Doukas, 19:2. The nobleman's name was Salagruzo de Negro. Colin Imber, *The Ottoman Empire 1300–1481* (Istanbul: Isis, 1990), 67, mentions a coin of Cüneyd dated 812 (16 May 1409 – 5 May 1410) on which Mehmed appears as his overlord. In order to agree with the information in Doukas, the coin would have to have been minted in the earlier part of that year, preceding Süleyman's departure for Rumeli. At that time, Süleyman was losing his grip on Anatolia, which would explain why Süleyman would take Cüneyd with him to Rumeli (presumably putting down his revolt and capturing him once again.)

[36] Konstantin the Philosopher, 31–33.

[37] Valentini, AAV, VI, 1–3; this document is also summarized by Iorga, *Notes et extraits (ROL)*, 311–312.

[38] See above.

agreement of other local powers, and that if they agreed the Republic would also do its part.

The information in the Venetian archives is followed up in a remarkable way by a Ragusan report written just a few months later. The document, which is dated 30 May 1410, can be translated as follows:

> Now a certain ship captain sailing near those coasts, who returned from Avlona on the 28th of the present month, reported to us that an ambassador of lord Mirchxe [Mircea] disembarked at Avlona from Constantinople on the 15th, saying that the emperor of Constantinople captured Gallipoli with its fortifications, with the exception of the citadel, and surrounded [the city] by land as well as by sea with eight ships, and that a truce has been declared, and [the city] is thought to have been secured. And that Celopia [Süleyman] has appeared with many men on the coast and has been diverted, asking the emperor and the Genoese to ferry him across, which was honorably denied to him, and has had to go back on account of the trouble of his brother Crespia [Kyritzes, i.e. Mehmed]. Avarnas [Evrenos] and six barons of Celopia [Süleyman] who had come to the Gallipoli area plotting [lit. "murmuring"] were captured by Musacelopia [Musa Çelebi].[39]

It is difficult to understand why Mircea's ambassador would have returned to Wallachia via Avlona rather than the Black Sea. Whatever the reason, it must be said that this is a remarkable document, for it provides evidence of important events that are mentioned in none of the other chronicles that we have been using. Neither Doukas nor Chalkokondyles mentions a Byzantine reconquest of Gallipoli, which is of course not surprising, since the fortress had not been taken and the Byzantines were unable to retain the town for long. Finally, there is no evidence in the *Ahval* or anywhere else of Musa arresting six of Süleyman's "barons."

This was a key moment in the Ottoman succession wars, since it involved all three brothers who were competing for the throne. Moreover, the one who had thus far been the strongest, Süleyman, was at this time in the least advantageous position, as he was caught between

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[39] Gelcich and Thalloczy, *Diplomatarium*, 195. As the text is somewhat convoluted, I give also the original: *hodie vero ad hec littora navigans quidam brigantinus, qui die XXVIII. presentis de Avalona recesserat, nobis retulit ambassiatorem domini Mirchxe a partibus Constantinopolis in diebus XV. descendisse ad Valonam, narrantem Constantinopolitanum imperatorem Gallipoli cum fortiliciis, dempta magistra turri, cepisse, eandemque circuisse per terram et galeis octo per mare, datisque induciis creditur nunc adepta; Celopiam vero cum magno gencium apparatu ad littora declinasse, petentem ab imperatore et Januensibus paregium, cui honesto modo denegatum fuit, et propter Crespie fratris molestias retrocessit. Avarnas et sex baronos Celopie, qui ad partes Galipolis susurantes venerant, a Musicelopia detinentur captivos.*

Musa in Rumeli and Mehmed in Anatolia. Mehmed is explicitly mentioned in the Ragusan report, and we know that he lost no time in taking advantage of Süleyman's predicament.[40] According to Abdülvasi Çelebi's *Ḥalīlnāme*, at this time Mehmed may even have won a military victory against Süleyman at Ankara.[41] Faced with such a difficult situation, Süleyman had nowhere else to turn but Byzantium. Having predicted this situation four months in advance, Manuel was determined to use it to his advantage, with or without Venetian help. After Venice's refusal to participate in the operation, it seems that Manuel had been able to gain the cooperation of the Genoese of Pera, who had provided enough ships to make up a fleet of eight. With that fleet and a land army, Manuel had been able to capture Gallipoli from Musa, and was refusing to ferry Süleyman across the straits. Trapped in Anatolia, Süleyman would have to deal with Mehmed, while in the meantime Musa's hold over Rumeli would be weakened by defections caused by the close proximity of Süleyman, who might eventually be allowed to cross.

This is in fact what appears to have happened. Fifteen days after the Ragusan report was written, Manuel ferried Süleyman's army across the straits to Constantinople and supported him the next day against Musa in the Battle of Kosmidion (15 June 1410), which was fought in close proximity to the land walls of Constantinople. Perhaps in the negotiations leading up to this event the Byzantines had agreed to turn over Gallipoli to Süleyman if he was victorious; or maybe the Byzantines had been unable to hold Gallipoli and it had been recaptured by Musa—the Ragusan report cited above suggests that it had not yet been secured, since the fortress was still holding out. As the Ragusan report is our only source on this obscure event, it is impossible to know for sure. But one thing is certain: the situation on the straits at this time was an extremely complicated one. Further evidence of this is provided by a Byzantine short chronicle, which mentions that a battle took place on 3 June 1410 between Musa and a force loyal to Süleyman in Hagios Phokas (modern Ortaköy) on the European side of the Bosphorus.[42]

[40] Mioni, "Una inedita cronaca bizantina," 75, 82 (entry 31). Note that Peter Schreiner was unable to include this important short chronicle in his collection, since he was unaware of its existence.

[41] *Ḥalīlnāme*, 1754. It is not clear if this couplet refers to a victory of Mehmed against Süleyman at Ankara, or to the earlier military confrontation there between the two brothers described in chapter 3, which ended in Mehmed's defeat and loss of the city.

[42] Mioni, "Una inedita cronaca bizantina," 75, 82 (entry 30).

According to the chronicle, this battle was won by Musa, who captured Hagios Phokas as a result. The source is particularly intriguing, because it states that Musa fought this battle "with Paschainoi" (*μετά Πασχαινῶν*), an otherwise unknown word that may derive from the Turkish *baskın* ('raid').[43] If that etymology is correct, then the chronicle suggests that Musa was able to maintain the loyalty of the raiders of Rumeli at a time when Süleyman's presence in the area was causing others in his camp to desert.

We have seen that according to the same short chronicle, Süleyman and his army were ferried across the straits on Byzantine ships on 14 June 1410. The *Ahval* states that after crossing the straits, Süleyman went directly to Constantinople, where he renewed his alliance with Byzantine Emperor Manuel II "by promising him some regions."[44] Several Byzantine chronicles also make reference to a marriage alliance between Süleyman and Manuel, who is said to have given the Ottoman prince a granddaughter's hand in marriage.[45] It was probably also at this time that Süleyman gave his son Orhan along with a daughter to the Byzantine Emperor as hostages.[46] It seems that somehow Manuel and Süleyman ended up renewing the alliance that they had made in 1403. If we accept that the Byzantines had come into conflict with Musa over Gallipoli, then they would have had good reason to renew their support for Süleyman and ferry him across.[47]

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[43] I am indebted to Elizabeth Zachariadou for this observation, which comes from a comparison with the modern Greek argot term *μπασκίνας*.

[44] OA, 87b; Mz, 130.

[45] See Barker, *Manuel II*, 253 n. 88. The anonymous chronicle in Codex Barberinus Grecus 111 and pseudo-Phranzes identify this princess as the daughter of Manuel's deceased brother Theodore, while Chalkokondyles states that she was the daugher of Hilario Doria, Manuel's son-in-law through his illegitimate daughter Zampia (163). A daughter of the same Doria was supposedly married to "Küçük" (little) Mustafa in 1422; this fact could account for the confusion in Chalkokondyles.

[46] For the Ottoman chronicles' treatment of this episode, see Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Tarihi*, 1, 340. While Aşıkpaşazade claims that Orhan and his sister escaped to Constantinople after their father's death, other Ottoman chroniclers refer to them explicitly as hostages.

[47] This must have happened some time after the information in the Ragusan report was obtained. Although the report is dated 30 May, it states that the information on which it is based was received in Avlona on 15 May from Mircea's ambassador coming from Constantinople, when it must have already been at least a few days old. That leaves approximately one month for Musa to have taken Gallipoli from the Byzantines, and for them to have reached an agreement with Süleyman, which might have involved further territorial concessions to Byzantium. There is no record of any such concessions ever having taken effect; the continuation of the struggle in Rumeli between Musa and

The conflict in Rumeli between Süleyman and Musa can also be seen as an indirect power struggle between the two Ottoman princes' respective Christian patrons, Emperor Manuel II of Byzantium and Voyvoda Mircea the Elder of Wallachia. In this light, it is interesting to note the parallel between the alleged marriage alliance of Süleyman with Manuel and that of Musa with Mircea. As we will see in a moment, in the Battle of Kosmidion the presence of both Manuel and Mircea is discernible behind the scenes, and it is extremely likely that Manuel witnessed the battle with his own eyes. Both rulers were trying to use the Ottoman princes to their own advantage. We must not forget the mention of an ambassador of Mircea to Constantinople in the Ragusan document that we have just seen; one can only speculate on the purpose of his embassy. The two Orthodox Christian rulers were apparently trying to work together in order to weaken the Ottomans, while at the same time attempting to increase their own power. Whatever their plans, in the end they failed and simply ended up on opposite sides of the Ottoman succession struggle.

The Battles of Kosmidion (15 June 1410) and Edirne (11 July 1410)

The first great military confrontation between Musa and Süleyman was the Battle of Kosmidion (15 June 1410), in which Musa was defeated. This battle is documented in three Byzantine short chronicles, two of which give the correct date, and is also described in detail by Konstantin the Philosopher and Chalkokondyles.[48] The *Ahval* barely mentions the battle, stating simply that Musa lost it because some of his *begs* deserted him and went over to their former lord Süleyman.[49] It

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Süleyman, and Süleyman's death only nine months later, would probably have made it impossible anyway. We know from Symeon of Thessaloniki that when the Byzantines repossessed Thessaloniki after the treaty of 1403 they encountered many difficulties, and that it took a long time for them to gain control of the city. See *Symeon*, 44, 115–116.

[48] Schreiner, *Kleinchroniken*, I, 97 (9/39); I, 636 (96/3); II, 396–397. Mioni, "Una inedita cronaca bizantina," 75, 82 (31). Of Schreiner's chronicles, the first (9/39) mistakenly suggests that Musa submitted to Manuel II and gives the wrong date for the Battle of Kosmidion.

[49] OA, 87b; Mz, 130. This is reminiscent of the Battle of Ankara, in which soldiers in Bayezid's army from the recently conquered *beylik*s had deserted to the enemy when they saw their old rulers on Timur's side, and when it became clear that he was winning. Like in 1402, at Kosmidion the outcome of the battle must have

does not specify who these *begs* might have been, but the information is corroborated by Konstantin, who also states that Stefan Lazarević's brother Vuk deserted to Süleyman on the eve of the battle.[50] As for Stefan himself, it appears that Manuel II tried to persuade him to switch sides. According to Chalkokondyles, Manuel succeeded. On the other hand, Konstantin records Stefan as fighting on Musa's side at Kosmidion, but deserting after Musa was routed, and entering Constantinople on Manuel's ships, where he was well-received by the Emperor so that "victors and defeated came into the imperial city together."[51] Whether or not Manuel succeeded in persuading Stefan Lazarević to switch sides is unknown, but it makes little difference anyway, since Stefan returned to Serbia via Wallachia, where (perhaps under pressure from his fellow Hungarian vassal Mircea) he renewed his loyalty to Musa.

The role of Byzantium in the Battle of Kosmidion is obvious. Konstantin the Philosopher states that Süleyman and his army "flowed out of the walls of Constantinople," and that Manuel had even readied ships to rescue them if necessary, which were burned by Musa before the battle.[52] The battle itself took place just outside the city walls, near the suburb of Kosmidion (modern Eyüp) on the Golden Horn, within sight of the Byzantine imperial palace of Blachernae.[53] It seems that Musa, having succeeded in inflicting heavy losses on Süleyman's army, was winning at first, but that in the end, Süleyman was able to rout him

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been highly uncertain. Before Süleyman's arrival at Constantinople, while Musa was the only contender in Rumeli, it stands to reason that out of caution most people there would have joined his side. But when they saw that Süleyman was back, that he had the support of Byzantium, and that he stood a good chance of defeating Musa, it was only natural that many of them would want to be on the side of the winner.

[50] Konstantin the Philosopher, 33–34. The chronicle states that Musa eventually retreated "on account of the disloyalty of his warriors and because of the limited number of those remaining." It also adds that after Vuk's desertion, Musa promised to kill him and give all of his land in Serbia to Stefan. Şehabeddin Tekindağ, "Mûsâ Çelebî," 663, citing İdris Bitlisi, states that Musa was also deserted by the timariots.

[51] Konstantin the Philosopher, 34–35.

[52] Konstantin the Philosopher, 33.

[53] Mioni's short chronicle states very specifically that the battle took place before the gate of Kalligarioi, which corresponds to the Ottoman Eğri Kapı. See Mioni, "Una inedita cronaca bizantina," 75, 82 (31). See also Raymond Janin, *Constantinople byzantine: développement urbain et répertoire topographique* (Paris: Institut français d'études byzantines, 1950), 338–339. For the location of Kosmidion and Kalligarioi, see Map 1 in Janin's work.

by attacking his encampment with a few hundred men.[54] According to Konstantin, the Battle of Kosmidion was extremely bloody and left the fields and shores around Constantinople littered with corpses.

After his defeat, Musa took refuge in the forests of Bulgaria, in the region of Yambol and Černomen (Çirmen) where he was supported by his Wallachian allies, who were still loyal to him.[55] According to Konstantin the Philosopher, he remained active at this time, seeing "that once again fighters—raiders above all—were gathering around him."[56] Meanwhile, Süleyman resumed power in Edirne. Doukas, who does not discuss the Battle of Kosmidion at all, states that Süleyman dispatched Cüneyd to Bulgaria and appointed him governor of "*Achridai*" (proably Ochrid in Macedonia).[57] In so doing, apart from ensuring that Cüneyd would not revolt again in the İzmir region, he probably hoped to establish control over the central part of Rumeli by placing it in the hands of someone of proven ambition, who was also totally dependent on him, with no ties to Rumeli's political circles.

The end result of Kosmidion for Musa was thus a retreat to the Yambol region of Eastern Bulgaria, an area lying at the midpoint between Edirne (his objective) and the Dobrudja (his main power base where he still enjoyed the support of the *akıncı* and Wallachians). This forms an interesting parallel to Mehmed's retreat to his own power base of Rum when Süleyman invaded Anatolia and took Bursa and Ankara from him five years earlier. Being able to rely on such a power base in the periphery worked to the advantage of both Musa and Mehmed, whereas İsa and Süleyman, being based in the center, were always dependent on the changing loyalties of the Byzantines, the *beylik*s, and the *uc begleri*.

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[54] Chalkokondyles, 162; Konstantin the Philosopher, 34.

[55] Tekindağ, "Mûsâ Çelebî", 663.

[56] Konstantin the Philosopher, 35.

[57] Doukas, 19:3. Balfour, *Symeon*, 134 n. 107, has suggested that by "Achridai" Doukas does not mean the Macedonian town of Ochrid (Ἀχρίδα) but rather a wild region in the Rhodope mountains of Thrace just east of Edirne named Ἀχριδώς. For the location of this region, see Catherine Asdracha and Nikos G. Svoronos, *La région des Rhodopes aux XIIIe et XIVe siècles: Étude de géographie historique* (Athens: Verlag der byzantinisch-neugriechischen Jahrbücher, 1976), 148–154 and map 1. It seems unlikely that this region would even have had a governor, since it was so close to Edirne, the Ottoman capital of Rumeli. Moreover, Süleyman's intention was obviously to keep Cüneyd as far away from the straits and Anatolia as possible, and Ochrid was much better suited for this purpose. As we will see, Doukas relates that Cüneyd took advantage of the confusion following Süleyman's death to return to Anatolia via Thrace, where he came in conflict with Mehmed (see chapter 5).

Once the Battle of Kosmidion was over and the two brothers had left Constantinople for their respective bases, the situation in Rumeli was still by no means resolved. In the months that followed, Musa and Süleyman fought for control of Serbia and Bulgaria, and the Serbs played a central part in that struggle. According to Konstantin the Philosopher, Süleyman sent Stefan Lazarević's brother Vuk to Serbia to seize Stefan's land before he could get back. To prevent this occupation from taking place, Musa dispatched to Philippopolis (Filibe, Plovdiv) "a certain *voyvoda* named Aliaz—certainly not with troops, since he didn't have enough himself, but as former Voyvoda of Philippopolis, who was the only one in a position to reach the city."[58] When Aliaz (probably *İlyas*) reached the city on July 3, he found Vuk before it, and was forced to hide in the forest until he had sent men inside to gain the support of the inhabitants. Eventually, despite some opposition from the nobility, he was able to take back the city and capture Vuk Lazarević and his nephew Lazar Branković, the son of Vuk Branković and brother of George Branković, famous in later Ottoman history as Stefan's successor. The two men were taken to Musa, who executed Vuk for betraying him and joining Süleyman before the Battle of Kosmidion.[59]

After describing Vuk's execution, Konstantin the Philosopher informs us that Süleyman appeared again and chased Musa to Edirne, which Musa was able to occupy temporarily. This led to another battle outside the city, the Battle of Edirne (11 July 1410). According to Konstantin, during that battle Musa pressured Lazar Branković, who was in his captivity, to persuade his older brother George to join him; but Lazar failed to deliver and Musa lost the battle. He therefore

[58] Konstantin the Philosopher, 35–36.

[59] Konstantin the Philosopher, 36–38. This event is also mentioned by a Byzantine short chronicle, but in a confused way. See Schreiner, *Kleinchroniken*, I, 563 [72a/17]; II, 397–398. The chronicle confuses Vuk Lazarević, Vuk Branković, and Lazar Branković, making reference to a "Vunko Pranko" sent by Stefan Lazarević and Emir Süleyman to negotiate a settlement with Musa by giving him land. The chronicler calls Emir Süleyman *Kyritzes Sultan*, probably due to confusion with Mehmed. The use of *Kyritzes Sultan* for Süleyman is not necessarily a mistake, since *Kyritzes* is simply the Greek translation of the Turkish *Çelebi*; but that title is almost always reserved for Mehmed, including in the next entry of the same chronicle, which begins just like the one before it. It is likely that what we have here is just another case of mistaken identity. While we have seen that is not impossible that Süleyman and Stefan Lazarević might at this time have been temporary allies, it is unlikely that Stefan would have been able to "send" his brother Vuk anywhere, since the two Serbs were involved in a family dispute of their own.

executed Lazar before retreating from Edirne, leaving his corpse on the battlefield where it was later discovered by Süleyman's forces. Musa then fled to Stefan Lazarević, while George Branković went with Süleyman's army to Philippopolis. There Süleyman gave George permission to avenge his brother's death by setting fire to the city. In Konstantin's words "the murderers fled into the fortress and saved themselves in the most various of ways; some, however, were still killed."[60]

According to Konstantin, after George and Süleyman had left Philippopolis, Musa sent one of his commanders there. This man was able to get into the town, persuade the inhabitants that Süleyman had been deposed, and make off with the tax money that he found collected there. When Süleyman learned of this, he punished the townsfolk by going there himself and taxing them again, even though it was very difficult for them to find enough money. He also arrested some Muslim notables and wanted to have them killed, "but when he was in the bath he started again to drink wine, and so was persuaded to pardon them."[61] Even after Süleyman left, the troubles of the town were not over, for Musa himself came back, sacked it, and killed the metropolitan Damian who had refused to hand it over to him. Upon hearing the news, Süleyman returned, and Musa was forced to flee once again.[62]

The Death of Süleyman (17 February 1411)

The sequence of events between the Battle of Edirne (11 July 1410) and Musa's final confrontation with Süleyman that ended with his victory and Süleyman's death (17 February 1411) appears somewhat confused in the sources. This is not surprising, if we consider that during that time the civil war between the two brothers was continuing relentlessly, but Musa was avoiding an open confrontation with Süleyman since he had lost the previous two. We know from Konstantin the Philosopher, Chalkokondyles, and several Byzantine short chronicles that after his defeat at Edirne, Musa took refuge on the Danube with his allies Mircea and Stefan Lazarević, "exchanging one place for another" and spending time around Vidin and Golubač.[63] But even-

[60] Konstantin the Philosopher, 38–39.
[61] Konstantin the Philosopher, 40.
[62] Konstantin the Philosopher, 40–41.
[63] Chalkokondyles, 163: *παραμείβων ἄλλην ἐξ ἄλλης χώραν*; Konstantin the Philoso-

tually he moved south again. A Byzantine short chronicle tells us that he returned to Thrace and took control of a mountain near Yambol "where he engaged in wickedness with the Muslims, so that no man of Emir Süleyman Beg could move from castle to castle. And when Emir Süleyman Beg heard this, he came to Edirne with a multitude of soldiers and lords and started distributing money to the armies, so that they would chase (Musa) out again."[64] It is probable that Musa's return to Yambol coincided temporally with the events in Philippopolis described above—as we have seen, Konstantin states that Musa eventually appeared there in person. Furthermore, the Byzantine short chronicle's reference to Süleyman paying his soldiers in Edirne in order to win their support is intriguing. All sources agree that sometime between 11 July 1410 and 17 February 1411 Süleyman lost the loyalty of the overwhelming majority of his people, who deserted *en masse* to Musa when he suddenly appeared outside Edirne. Süleyman tried to make a hasty escape to Constantinople, but was killed on the way. Let us look at these events in more detail.

The short chronicle entry following the one just examined can be translated as follows:

> As Emir Sülman had taken to bathing and was drinking one glass after another, the lords and grandees got fed up, and the armies left and started to desert to Musa Beg. When Emir Sülman heard this, he was afraid and tried to escape, but was caught in the area of *Bryse* and strangled on February 17, which was a Tuesday.[65]

Another short chronicle states simply that "in February of the year 6919 Musa appeared suddenly with an army in Adrianople and killed Mursumanes, and there was great confusion and battle with us."[66] From a purely factual point of view, these are among the best sources we have on the event. The first chronicle even mentions the time and place where Süleyman was caught: "Bryse" (*Βρύση*, meaning 'spring' or 'fountain') corresponds to Turkish Pınarhisar between Kırklareli (Kırk

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pher, 39; Schreiner, I, 97 (9/39), 562 (72a/15), 636 (96/5), II, 399–400. Since Vidin and Golubač are far from one another, it is not clear exactly where Musa was based at this time.

[64] Schreiner, I, 636–637 (96/6), II, 400. The chronicle confuses Macedonia with Thrace.

[65] Schreiner, I, 637 (96/7).

[66] Mioni, *Cronaca bizantina*, 75 (33).

Kilise) and Vize, and 17 February 1411 was indeed a Tuesday.[67] The second chronicle is less detailed, but contains two important pieces of information: that Musa took Süleyman by surprise, and that Süleyman was killed in the confusion that followed in a skirmish that supposedly involved Byzantine troops.

But the first chronicle also claims that prior to his demise Süleyman "had taken to bathing and was drinking one glass after another." Is Süleyman's drinking a sufficient explanation for such a sudden turn of events? Could the prince's entire army have deserted him simply because he chose to spend all his time drinking in the bath? Süleyman's drinking is a veritable *topos* in Byzantine and Ottoman chronicles alike, where, as we have seen, his presentation as a drunkard serves obvious political purposes. In fact, the *Ahval* tells the story of the defection of Süleyman's magnates with a literary flair, and deserves to be discussed in detail.

One day Musa, deciding to make a last attempt to wrest Edirne from his brother, gathered his army and marched on the city. His forces were led by the famous *uc begi* Mihal-oğlı Mehmed. When Süleyman, who was in the bath, was informed by one of his men that Musa had taken the area around the city, he took offense at having been disturbed and ordered that the man be executed. Then Hacı Evrenos himself went in and told Süleyman that Musa was there with a large army. Once again, Süleyman ignored the warning, saying to Evrenos "Hacı Lala, don't interrupt my entertainment! [Musa] doesn't have the courage to come here and face me." Frustrated, Evrenos asked the commander of the palace pages (*ḳapu oğlanları*) Hasan Ağa to have a word with Süleyman, saying, "he listens to you." But Süleyman was displeased with him too, and punished him by having his beard shaved. After such humiliation, Hasan Ağa announced that he was deserting to Musa and left, taking with him the entire palace guard. Following this event, the remaining *begs* held council and took an oath to desert as well, so that in the end, "of the known *begs* only Karaca Beg, Kara Mukbil and Oruç Beg remained with Süleyman."

The begs that had deserted informed Musa of Süleyman's situation, and Musa Çelebi's army entered Edirne. Realizing that he had been left alone and undefended, Süleyman escaped by night for Constantinople with Karaca Beg and Kara Mukbil. But there was also a

[67] Schreiner, II, 401.

guide (*kulağuz*) who betrayed them by leading them to a strange village called Dügünci İli, whose inhabitants he informed that the ruler was escaping.[68] Emir Süleyman and his *beg*s were suddenly surrounded by peasants. Karaca Beg and Kara Mukbil were slaughtered, and Süleyman himself was captured. Then the peasants debated whether they should kill Süleyman or let him live. In the meantime, Musa and his army arrived, and Musa gave his brother to his henchman Koyun Musası, who strangled him.[69]

One can, of course, choose to discount the *Ahval*'s account as politically motivated slander indended to show that Süleyman's courtly habits made him unfit for rule. But the fact remains that several people are mentioned by name, making this one of the richest accounts that has come down to us. In fact, Süleyman's death is one event in the civil war not lacking in rich accounts. Curiously, however, they all seem somehow related regardless of whether they are Ottoman, Byzantine, or Serbian.[70] Thus, Konstantin states that after Süleyman returned to Edirne, "he devoted himself to drinking wine, saying, '[Musa] goes about as if he were a raider, and I will not go against him in the manner of a raider.'" But Musa and his raiders surrounded Edirne. Seeing that it was impossible to face them, Süleyman's officers told him that they had to go outside the walls to defend the city. The bulk of Süleyman's army then left the city, marched "most openly" along the river Tundža, and deserted to Musa. When Süleyman, who was "wholeheartedly engaged in drinking," realized what had happened, he made off with a few remaining men for Constantinople. When the news spread that Süleyman was fleeing, he and his men were hunted down and were killed.[71]

The accounts of Doukas and Aşıkpaşazade are also similar. Like the short chronicle we saw above, Doukas states that Süleyman engaged in great acts of generosity in Edirne, and that he dealt with Musa by sending an army against him while he himself stayed in the city carousing. Alone of all the sources, Doukas mentions that Musa defeated Süley-

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[68] It is worth noting that there is a village in the Lüleburgaz area today named Dügüncübaşı.

[69] OA, 88a–90a; Mz, 131–132.

[70] On the question of whether the historiographical traditions are in fact unrelated at all, see Colin Imber, "Canon and Apocrypha in Early Ottoman History," *Studies in Ottoman history in honour of Professor V.L. Ménage*, ed. Colin Heywood and Colin Imber (Istanbul: Isis, 1994), 117–138.

[71] Konstantin the Philosopher, 41–42.

man's army around Sofia, and that "the rumor spread everywhere that Musa was to become the ruler of the West." Doukas states that "the whole populace flocked to [Musa's] side, and not a few of the magnates." Meanwhile, when Süleyman became aware of Musa's imminent entry into Edirne, "he came to his senses from the lethargy of intoxication and decided to leave for Constantinople, but it was too late. He was escorted by a few horsemen, but they too abandoned him and defected to Musa." Süleyman eventually ended up in an unnamed village, where he was confronted by five archers. He shot two of them, and the remaining three killed him and cut off his head. Musa later burnt the entire village and all its inhabitants to avenge his brother's death.[72]

The burning of the village also appears in Aşıkpaşazade. The relevant passage can be translated as follows:

> All the *tovica*s and timariots of Rumeli went over to Musa. They rode straight for Edirne. Emir Süleyman received news that "your brother Musa has arrived, and all of Rumeli has gone over to him." Emir Süleyman was lying in bed with a hangover. They forced him to get up. He said, "What authority does he have in my realm?" Just as he spoke those words, they shouted "Hey! Musa's here!" and he ran away. He came upon a village, where he was killed. Later Musa burnt that village and its inhabitants, saying, "Why did you kill my brother?"[73]

The reference to the *tovica* is particularly interesting, and fits in well with Konstantin's description of Edirne being surrounded by Musa's raiders. Moreover, the story that Süleyman was killed by villagers whose village Musa later burned to avenge his brother's death is identical to the account of Doukas. This makes the *Ahval* the only source that presents Musa as directly responsible for his brother's death. As we will see, this serves later in the *Ahval*'s account as justification for Mehmed's invasion of Rumeli and his overthrow of Musa. What is interesting is that in the *Ahval*, the villagers appear, but are not ultimately responsible for what happens to Süleyman. They are not punished and their village is not burned.

Having looked at all these different accounts, one may wonder if it is at all possible to separate fact from fiction when it comes to the death of Süleyman. As Cemal Kafadar has pointed out, Marshal Sahlins'

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[72] Doukas, 19:4–6. Note the parallel to Doukas' assertion that İsa was decapitated (chapter 2).

[73] Aşıkpaşazade, 73.

observation that real events are sometimes as symbolic as fictional ones is certainly applicable to early Ottoman historical narratives.[74] This much said, some facts clearly stand out in the accounts that have come down to us. In the months prior to his demise, Süleyman was staying in Edirne. He sent an army against Musa, which he did not (or could not) lead in person. There was probably a battle near Sofia in which that army was defeated. Following the defeat, perhaps on account of Süleyman's refusal to face his brother in person, most of the high-ranking officers in Süleyman's government deserted to Musa when he suddenly appeared on the outskirts of Edirne, taking their fighters with them. Left with only a few followers, Süleyman had no other choice but escape. The obvious destination was Constantinople, the city that had given him help and refuge in the past; but somehow he was captured in the wilderness between Edirne and Constantinople and strangled. The dubious circumstances under which Emir Süleyman was killed seem to have given rise to many legends and interpretations. We will never know for sure whether he was executed by Musa's direct order or not, but one thing is certain: now that he was dead, there was a new regime in Rumeli. In the next chapter we will see what it was like.

[74] Cemal Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds*, 8, 180–181 n. 134.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE REIGN OF MUSA ÇELEBİ AND THE END OF THE CIVIL WAR (17 FEBRUARY 1411 – 5 JULY 1413)

Musa Çelebi's victory over Emir Süleyman resulted in a reversal of Süleyman's conciliatory policies toward the Christian powers of Rumeli. As we saw in chapter 1, under Emir Süleyman, Byzantium and Serbia had regained a measure of autonomy. Byzantium had ceased to pay tribute to the Ottomans and had regained important territory, while the Serbian ruler Stefan Lazarević had remained an Ottoman vassal, but had achieved enough autonomy to forge close ties also with Byzantium and Hungary. Furthermore, we have seen that during Süleyman's reign there was a marked decrease in Ottoman raiding activity in Rumeli. However, when Musa came to power, Bayezid I's aggressive expansionist policies were resumed. Unlike Süleyman, Musa did not pursue treaties with Byzantium and the other Christian powers of Rumeli. As we will see, he was not averse to signing treaties with powers such as Venice, whose possessions were on the periphery rather than at the center of Ottoman expansion in Rumeli. At the center, however, he tried to impose direct Ottoman rule, attacking Byzantium and Serbia with the eventual aim of incorporating their territory into the *timar* system.

Shortly after coming to power, Musa resumed the siege of Constantinople abandoned by his father before Ankara, and tried to win back the territory that Süleyman had ceded to Byzantium in 1403. He also attacked Serbia, despite the assistance that Stefan Lazarević had provided to him in his struggles against Süleyman. As we will see below, according to the chronicle of Konstantin the Philosopher, Musa practiced policies of forced exile and resettlement (*sürgün*) in order to Ottomanize the region. In more peripheral areas, however, he emphasized raiding and the forging of alliances with various local rulers against their enemies, with the eventual aim of turning those rulers into Ottoman vassals.[1] This policy can be discerned in Musa's relation-

[1] The standard work on these practices is Halil İnalcık, "Ottoman Methods of Conquest."

ship with Mircea of Wallachia and Carlo Tocco of Cephalonia, two Christian rulers with whom he is reported to have formed marriage alliances.

Musa's centralizing policies aimed not only at eliminating major Christian vassals like Byzantium and Serbia, but also at breaking the power of internal elites like the Çandarlı family of viziers and the *uc begleri* of Rumeli. The Ottoman chronicles and other sources, especially Konstantin, contain numerous references to Musa's harsh policies toward his own magnates, which resulted in their alienation from his regime. In their place Musa appointed his own people, who included various *kul*s as well as the important scholar and mystic Şeyh Bedreddin. By appointing Bedreddin, Musa was probably trying to increase his popular appeal, since Bedreddin was a native of Rumeli and enjoyed wide popular support among both Muslims and Christians.

The sources are unanimous in presenting Musa Çelebi as a harsh and despotic ruler. However, the *Ottoman Anonymous Chronicles*, which reflect the views of the raiders of Rumeli, also characterize him as fair and generous to the army, especially the janissaries. Despite his apparent appeal with certain segments of the population, Musa's attacks on Byzantium and Serbia and his alienation of the *uc begleri* and other magnates led to his rapid demise. Musa's enemies supported rival pretenders to the Ottoman throne, including Emir Süleyman's son Orhan and the son of Savcı, eventually uniting behind his main rival Mehmed Çelebi. After two unsuccessful campaigns carried out in collaboration with Byzantium and Stefan Lazarević, Mehmed Çelebi was finally able to defeat and kill Musa at the Battle of Çamurlu (5 July 1413). As we have seen, Mehmed's army in that final battle of the Ottoman civil war included Turcoman and Tatar cavalry from Anatolia, Byzantine and Serbian forces, and contingents from Bosnia and Hungary under Stefan Lazarević's fellow Hungarian vassal, the Bosnian lord Sandalj Hranić-Kosača. Mehmed's victory at Çamurlu made him the sole ruler of a reunited Ottoman Empire spanning both Anatolia and Rumeli: when Musa was killed the civil war was over, although of course it was revived at various times in the following years.

Musa's Administration and the Uc Begleri

As we saw in the previous chapter, Musa came to power with the support of the *akıncı* of Rumeli. These people were displeased with Süleyman's peaceful policies toward the neighboring Christian powers, which had led to a decrease in raiding, their main source of income. Just before the final battle that resulted in Süleyman's death, Evrenos and other powerful magnates and *uc begleri* had abandoned Süleyman for Musa. Several Ottoman chronicles explain that after coming to power, Musa therefore doubted the loyalty of the *uc begleri* and the people of Rumeli in general, reasoning that since they had abandoned his brother, they might just as easily abandon him. Let us take a closer look at these chronicles.

According to the *Ahval*, after attending to the burial of his brother Süleyman, Musa "went around and secured Rumeli in its entirety, and started eliminating well-known begs from among the begs of Rumeli. The reason was that he knew from how they had shown their loyalty to Emir Süleyman how they would act toward *him*."[2] The same idea is echoed in a passage from the *Ottoman Anonymous Chronicles*, which can be translated as follows:

> When Musa Çelebi advanced his own men, he removed the *beg*s of Rumeli from their posts. He saw how they had turned from his brother and betrayed him, and knew that they would turn from him and betray him too. Such have always been and will always be the ways [*'ādetler*] of Rumeli. So he decided to eliminate or imprison all the *beg*s whose loyalty he suspected. And the *beg*s of Rumeli learned of this situation. They withdrew, watched, and waited to see what fortune would bring. Out of fear of Sultan Musa, Evrenos Beg feigned blindness.[3]

This passage is followed by a revealing story, in which Musa summons Evrenos to his court to test his blindness, sets before him a plate of cooked frogs, and orders him to eat it. Eventually Evrenos complies, and Musa is convinced that he has gone blind and lets him go. We are told that Musa regretted his decision later on, when he found out that Evrenos had regained his eyesight and joined Mehmed Çelebi.

However much Musa may have distrusted the *uc begleri*, they wielded a great deal of power in Rumeli. As the rapid demise of both Süleyman and Musa Çelebi demonstrates, it was impossible to hold Rumeli

[2] OA, 90b–91a; Mz, 133. My emphasis.
[3] *Ottoman Anonymous Chronicles*, 49–50.

without the support of at least the principal ones among them. This is probably why upon his accession to the throne in Edirne, Musa appointed the great *uc begi* Mihal-oğlı Mehmed as his *beglerbegi* for Rumeli.[4] Mihal-oğlı was without a doubt one of the most powerful *uc begleri* in Rumeli. By appointing him *beglerbegi* upon his accession, Musa may have intended to play him against the other *uc begleri*, especially Evrenos and Paşa Yigit, who had both been powerful under Emir Süleyman.[5] But Mihal-oğlı did not remain loyal to Musa for long. Probably as early as September of 1411, he defected to Mehmed Çelebi.

Mihal-oğlı Mehmed's defection to Mehmed Çelebi is discussed in Konstantin the Philosopher and the *Ahval*, but the two chronicles disagree on the timing of this event. While Konstantin states that Mihal-oğlı defected to Mehmed Çelebi during the siege of Selymbria, the *Ahval* places his defection during the Battle of İnceğiz.[6] The disagreement may be due to the fact that Konstantin mentions Mihal-oğlı's defection alongside that of Çandarlı İbrahim Paşa, which suggests that the chronicler may have confused the two events. The common source of Aşıkpaşazade and the *Ottoman Anonymous Chronicles* does not mention Mihal-oğlı Mehmed's defection at all, stating only that after the end of the civil war, Mehmed Çelebi had Mihal-oğlı imprisoned in Tokat. This creates the false impression that Mihal-oğlı was on Musa's side all along, and that his imprisonment by Mehmed Çelebi should be attributed to his alliance with the defeated party. Regardless of the exact timing and circumstances of Mihal-oğlı's defection, it is clear that by 1413 he had joined Çelebi Mehmed's side, since the *Ahval* presents him repeatedly as a commander in Mehmed Çelebi's army. Seen in this light, Mihal-oğlı's imprisonment in Tokat appears as a precaution rather than a punishment. Despite his indispensable aid against Musa, if Mihal-oğlı remained in Rumeli he might still pose a threat, since he

[4] Aşıkpaşazade, 74; *Ottoman Anonymous Chronicles*, 49.

[5] As we saw in the last chapter, and will see again below when discussing Musa's relations with Venice, the Venetians were well aware of the power that the *uc begleri* wielded in Rumeli. In a document dated June 1411, the Venetian Senate pointed out that "according to the information we have, this Michal Bey is one of the greatest barons of the aforementioned lord (Musa)." The Venetians were also aware that the relative power of the *beg*s could change with the vicissitudes of the Ottoman civil war: in the same document, they advised their ambassador to try to determine the relative power of Evrenos and Paşa Yigit, with whom they had dealt in the past, and to bribe them accordingly in order to protect their possessions in Albania. See Valentini, AAV 6, 154–155, as well as the section on the Treaty of Selymbria below.

[6] Konstantin the Philosopher, 44–45; OA, 92b; Mz, 134.

was very powerful and might change his allegiances yet again. It should be remembered that as late as 1444, Murad II mistrusted the *uc begleri* of Rumeli and spoke of their infidelity toward Musa.[7]

Mihal-oğlı Mehmed was not the only high-ranking member of Musa's regime to be imprisoned by Mehmed Çelebi after his victory in 1413. Another famous case is that of Musa's *kazasker* Şeyh Bedreddin, who was sent to İznik with a salary of one thousand *akçe* in what amounted to an honorable form of exile.[8] The revolt of Şeyh Bedreddin has been discussed in the introduction, and a detailed analysis of his revolt is beyond the scope of the present work. Apart from the post that he occupied, unfortunately little is known of Bedreddin's role in Musa's administration. It is noteworthy, however, that much of the support for Bedreddin's revolt came from the very same quarters that had supported Musa in his rise to power. These included İsfendiyar, Mircea, the *akıncı* of Rumeli and Dobrudja, and *sipāhī*s appointed by Musa who had lost their *tīmār*s after Mehmed's victory.

While the obvious parallels between Musa's rise to power and Bedreddin's revolt are insufficient to accept Wittek's claim that Musa's Rumeli represented "la Roumelie révolutionnaire," it is difficult not to see Musa's appointment of Bedreddin as a political move.[9] Even before his appointment as Musa's *kazasker*, during the peregrinations in Anatolia that followed his studies and conversion to sufism in Cairo, Bedreddin seems to have enjoyed widespread popularity as a holy man among both Muslim and Christian populations. In light of such reports, it is unlikely that his appointment to Musa's administration was due solely to the fact that he was a renowned jurist, as Imber has claimed.[10] In

[7] İnalcık and Oğuz, *Gazavât-ı Sultân Murâd b. Mehemmed Hân*, 13.

[8] Aşıkpaşazade, 148; Ḫalīl b. İsmāʿīl b. Şeyḫ Bedreddīn Maḥmūd, *Simavna Kadısıoğlu Şeyh Bedreddin Manâkıbı*, ed. Abdülbâki Gölpınarlı and İsmet Sungurbey (Istanbul: Eti Yayınevi, 1967), 44a. Hafız Halil specifically uses the words *sürdiler* (exiled) and *maḥbūs* (imprisoned) for his grandfather's stay in İznik. See H. Erdem Çıpa, "Contextualizing Şeyḫ Bedreddīn: Notes on Ḫalīl b. İsmāʿīl's Menāḳıb-ı Şeyḫ Bedreddīn b. İsrāʿīl" (sic) in *Şinasi Tekin'in Anısına: Uygurlardan Osmanlıya* (Istanbul: Simurg, 2005): 285–295. On Bedreddin and his revolt, see also Franz Babinger, "Schejch Bedr ed-din," *Der Islam* 11 (1921): 1–106; Michel Balivet, *Islam mystique et révolution armée dans les Balkans ottomans: Vie du Cheikh Bedreddîn le "Hallâj des Turcs" (1358/59–1416)* (Istanbul: Isis, 1995); Nedim Filipović, *Princ Musa i Šejh Bedreddin*; Abdülbaki Gölpınarlı, *Simavna Kadısıoğlu Şeyh Bedreddin* (Istanbul: Eti Yayınevi, 1966); Hans Joachim Kissling, "Der Menaqybname Scheich Bedr ed-Din's, des Sohnes des richters von Simavna," ZDMG 100 (1950), 112–176.

[9] Wittek, "De la défaite," 21–22.

[10] Imber, "Paul Wittek's 'De la défaite,'" 299–302. For a detailed discussion of Imber's views on the subject, see the introduction.

fact, we now know that even though Bedreddin himself was a member of the *ülema*, his father was most probably a *gazi* and his mother a Byzantine lady.[11] It is evident from several chronicles that Musa's policies were characterized by a certain populism toward the people of Rumeli, with whose support the Ottoman prince hoped to undermine the power and popularity of *uc begleri* such as Evrenos. As for Musa's aggressive policies toward the Christians, to which we will turn below, Cemal Kafadar has shown that in this period of Ottoman expansion, *gazi* activity was not necessarily incompatible with popularity among Christian populations.[12]

Let us turn now to Musa's remaining appointments. According to the common source of Aşıkpaşazade and the *Ottoman Anonymous Chronicles*, Musa appointed one of his own *kul*s named Azab Beg to the post of *mīr-i 'alem* (literally, 'flagbearer'). The same account tells us that Musa "gave each *sancak* to one of his own *kul*s."[13] It would therefore appear that despite his interest in resuming raiding against Christian territory, with the exception of Mihal-oğlı Mehmed, Musa avoided giving too much power to high-ranking *uc begleri*, trying instead to control his army and administration as directly as possible through his own *kul*s. This point is emphasized in another passage from the *Ottoman Anonymous Chronicles*, which is not included in Aşıkpaşazade:

> Musa Çelebi was very harsh and disliked the people of Rumeli for having betrayed his brother. But he liked his own *kul*s and was very generous to them. Some say that he would have gold coins (*filūrī*) mixed up with silver ones (*akçe*), fill a silver drinking cup with them, and distribute them to the janissaries and his own *kul*s. Or that he would take the tall caps off their heads and fill them with *filūrī* and *akçe* and distribute them. Later when Sultan Mehmed came, once again, all the people of Rumeli betrayed their allegiance and went over to Mehmed. Only his own *kul*s and the janissaries remained.[14]

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[11] Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds*, 143, 190 note 56. That Bedreddin's father was a *gazi* rather than a *kadi* has been proven by Orhan Şaik Gökyay, "Şeyh Bedreddin'in babası kadı mı idi?," *Tarih ve Toplum* 2 (February 1984): 96–98. Bedreddin's *gazi* origins are also attested in his *Menakıb* by Halil b. İsmail.

[12] Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds*, 143 *et passim*.

[13] Aşıkpaşazade, 74; *Ottoman Anonymous Chronicles*, 49. For the duties of the *mīr-i 'alem* ('flag-bearer'), a kind of valet who carried the ruler's flag and held his stirrup, see Mehmet Zeki Pakalın, *Osmanlı Tarih Deyimleri ve Terimleri Sözlügü* (Istanbul: Milli Eğitim Basımevi, 1946).

[14] *Ottoman Anonymous Chronicles*, 50.

As this passage demonstrates, it was hard for Musa to maintain the loyalty of the *akıncı* of Rumeli. This was especially the case once he had alienated their leaders, the powerful *uc begleri*.

When examining the make-up of Musa's administration, a particular problem is determining the identity of his grand vizier. The common source of Aşıkpaşazade and the *Ottoman Anonymous Chronicles* speaks of a certain Kör Şah Melik, whom we are told Musa appointed to the rank of (grand?) vizier.[15] As we will see below, this man also defected to Mehmed Çelebi and assisted him in his final campaign against Musa. However, the *Ahval* and Konstantin the Philosopher both present Çandarlı Ali Paşa's brother İbrahim as a high-ranking defector from Musa's camp, suggesting that he may have been his grand vizier.[16] Indeed, İbrahim Paşa would have been a logical choice for the position, since he was from the noble Çandarlı family which dominated the grand vizierate in this period of Ottoman history. On the other hand, nothing is known of Kör Şah Melik, apart from what is contained in the chronicle tradition to which we have referred. As we will see below, certain similarities in the accounts of the defections of Kör Şah Melik and İbrahim Paşa suggest that we may be dealing with the same person. If that is the case, then the rather odd name of Kör Şah Melik may be nothing more than a sobriquet.

The *Ahval* claims that İbrahim Paşa was sent to Constantinople to collect the tribute (*ḫarāc*) from the Byzantines, and that he took that opportunity to defect to Mehmed, whom he informed of "Musa Çelebi's abominable actions and of the hatred that the *beg*s harbored for him."[17] İbrahim Paşa's defection is also mentioned by Konstantin, alongside that of Mihal-oğlı Mehmed, which we have already seen.[18]

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[15] Aşıkpaşazade, 74; *Ottoman Anonymous Chronicles*, 49.

[16] OA, 91a. After the end of the civil war, Çandarlı İbrahim Paşa appears as *kazasker* (1415) and second vizier (1420) of Mehmed I, and after the death of Mehmed's grand vizier Bayezid Paşa, as grand vizier of Murad II until his death in 1429. *Aşıkpaşazade*, 196, states that İbrahim Paşa had been *kazasker* to Mehmed Çelebi, who had made him vizier upon occupying Bursa. In 1406, however, İbrahim appears as the *kadi* of Bursa under Emir Süleyman, where he drew up the *vakfiyye* of his deceased brother Ali Paşa. See İ. H. Uzunçarşılı, "Çandarlı Zâde Ali Paşa Vakfiyesi," *Belleten* 5.20 (Teşrin I, 1941): 549–578. It would seem, then, that İbrahim had been part of Süleyman's administration until Süleyman's death, and that upon the accession of Musa he defected to Mehmed to escape Musa's purges, as claimed by the *Ahval* and Konstantin the Philosopher. See V.L. Ménage, "Djandarlı," EI²; Wittek and Taeschner, "Die Vezirfamilie der Ǧandarlyzāde," 92–100.

[17] OA, 91a; Mz, 133.

[18] Konstantin the Philosopher, 45.

Konstantin states that the purpose of İbrahim Paşa's mission to Constantinople was to negotiate a treaty with the Byzantines. On the other hand, according to the *Ottoman Anonymous Chronicles* and Aşıkpaşazade, Kör Şah Melik took advantage of the siege of Selymbria to escape to Constantinople, and from there to Mehmed Çelebi.[19] This story bears a striking resemblance to the information on Çandarlı İbrahim Paşa's defection in the *Ahval* and Konstantin the Philosopher, as well as to Konstantin's account of the defection of Mihal-oğlı Mehmed.

We have seen that most of the defections from Musa's camp took place within the context of his attacks on Byzantium and other Christian territories. Let us now turn our attention to those attacks.

The Resumption of Raiding and Musa's Attacks against Serbia and Byzantium

As was explained in chapter 4, the *akıncı* of Rumeli, who were dependent for their livelihood on plunder and prisoners from raiding, had been forced to limit their activities under Emir Süleyman on account of the treaties that he had signed with the Christian powers there. While we have seen that raiding had not disappeared entirely during Süleyman's reign, the *akıncı* nevertheless had a strong interest in its resumption in earnest, and seem for this reason to have turned against Süleyman and thrown their support behind his brother Musa. As a result, when Musa came to power he had to make good on his promises to these people by adopting an aggressive policy vis-à-vis his Christian neighbors. For his attacks against Byzantium, a further motive was the support that Manuel Palaiologos had provided to Emir Süleyman, as well as the fact that the Byzantines held in their custody a rival contender to the Ottoman throne, Süleyman's son Orhan.

The common source of Aşıkpaşazade and the *Ottoman Anonymous Chronicles*, which reflects the raiders' point of view, speaks explicitly of a rise in raiding activity during Musa's reign. According to this tradition, upon his accession to the throne in Rumeli, Musa Çelebi "pursued the opening of new lands," meaning of course their conquest from the Christians. We are told that he attacked Vidin, which had revolted against Ottoman rule; Pravadi (Provadia) on the Black Sea;

[19] *Ottoman Anonymous Chronicles*, 51.

and Köprülü (Koprian) in Serbia (*Laz-ili*). Our source goes on to relate that following those conquests, Musa "commanded raids in every direction so that his lands were filled (with spoils) and became rich."[20]

As was explained in the beginning of this chapter, Musa's policies followed well-established Ottoman methods of conquest, which differentiated between vassal states such as Serbia and Byzantium that were to be absorbed into direct Ottoman administration, and borderland regions where the Ottomans made alliances with local lords against their enemies in an effort to gain new vassals and extend their sphere of influence. Thanks to the anonymous chronicle of the Tocco, we know that Musa formed such an alliance with Carlo Tocco of Cephalonia against Tocco's Albanian enemies. As with Musa's earlier alliance with Mircea of Wallachia, the new alliance with Carlo Tocco was sealed by Musa's marriage to Tocco's illegitimate daughter.[21] Meanwhile, in addition to major attacks against Byzantine and Serbian towns and cities, smaller-scale raids were carried out in Serbia, Albania, and Southern Greece.[22]

In order to place these events in their proper context, it is necessary to turn to the non-Ottoman sources. Several of these make it clear that after assuming power in Edirne, Musa turned his attention against Serbia and Byzantium by planning and carrying out a series of military campaigns and sieges. Symeon of Thessaloniki, who as we have seen presents Musa's rise to power as the outcome of an invitation by Manuel II, writes that after Musa came to power, he betrayed his

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[20] *Ottoman Anonymous Chronicles*, 51; Aşıkpaşazade, 74. The words are *Mūsā Çelebi il açmaḳ ardınca oldı*. The expression "il açmak" is derived from the Arabic *fataḥa*, and refers to the "opening up" of new lands for Islam. This expression would never have been used for military action against a Muslim state such as an Anatolian *beylik*. Apart from Vidin, Pravadi, and Köprülü, two other towns appear only in Aşıkpaşazade: those are *Akçabolu* and *Maṭari*. Unfortunately, I have been unable to identify them with certainty.

[21] Schirò, *Cronaca dei Tocco*, 360–362. This marriage alliance, which according to Schirò must have occurred in 1413 or shortly before, was against the Albanians of Zenevesi, who had been causing great problems for Tocco. The author of the chronicle states that the duke's daughter was illegitimate, but beautiful nonetheless: Ἡ θυγατέρα τοῦ δουκὸς ἀλήθεια σπούρια ἦτον, / ἀμὴ εἶχεν ξενοχάραγο κάλλους καὶ ἐμορφάδας 'La figlia veramente era bastarda, / però era di una bellezza e di una avvenenza straordinarie.'

[22] Thiriet, *Régestes*, 98 [7 April 1411]. The citizens of Nauplion complained that they were suffering greatly from Turkish raids that they were unable to predict, and the Venetian Senate advised the recruitment of spies to observe Turkish movements in the area. Thiriet, *Régestes*, 106.

oaths and attacked his Christian supporters viciously.[23] The reference to Musa's betrayed oaths is noteworthy, as it is also echoed in the account of Konstantin the Philosopher.

Let us turn then to the situation in Serbia. As we have seen, Stefan Lazarević had provided vital support to Musa in his war against Süleyman. But once that war was over, for reasons that are not entirely clear, the two men became enemies. While Chalkokondyles presents Musa's hostility against Stefan Lazarević as revenge for Stefan's abandonment of Musa at the Battle of Kosmidion, Konstantin the Philosopher places the blame for the falling out entirely on Musa.[24] Konstantin states that Stefan Lazarević sent an ambassador to the new Ottoman ruler to remind him of the promises he had made during the war, and that Musa responded by attempting to arrest that ambassador. Konstantin's account appears convincing, and he specifies that Stefan sent to Musa the same ambassador who had been sent previously to Timur. According to Konstantin, the purpose of this embassy was to "settle matters pertaining to mutual coexistence" after reminding Musa of Stefan's crucial role in his struggle against Süleyman. Konstantin adds that after the ambassador escaped from Musa, he stopped in the forest where Vuk Lazarević had been killed, collected his remains, and brought them with him back to Serbia. Reading Musa's hostile action against his ambassador as a declaration of war, Stefan then took the offensive by occupying the town of Pirot (Şehirköy). Whichever side was ultimately to blame for the souring of relations between two former allies, Stefan's occupation of Pirot marked the beginning of a state of war. According to several sources, Musa responded by ravaging the surrounding area, capturing three unnamed towns, and massacring their inhabitants. He also besieged the city of Smederovo, one of Stefan's northernmost possessions in the Danubian province of Mačva.[25]

Shortly after these operations in Serbia, Musa turned his vengeance against Byzantium, the main ally of his late brother and rival Süleyman. Musa invested Thessaloniki, Constantinople, and Selymbria,

[23] *Symeon*, 48.

[24] Chalkokondyles, 165; Konstantin the Philosopher, 42–43.

[25] Konstantin the Philosopher, 43; *Symeon*, 48, 124–125; Doukas, 19:8: "He plundered many villages and fields, took captive the young who were handsome in form, and all the rest he slaughtered by the sword. Taking three fortresses by assault he mowed down all within and, collecting the Christian cadavers, he spread a table over them on which he banqueted with his nobles" (tr. Magoulias).

probably in that order. Doukas informs us that before attacking Constantinople, Musa first captured all the villages along the river Strymon (Struma) with the exception of Zetounion.[26] Around the same time, Ottoman forces were sent to Thessaloniki and began to besiege the city. Symeon suggests that Musa himself was present when the trenches were drawn and the siege machines constructed.

By 12 August 1411, Musa was outside the walls of Constantinople. But by 3 August he had moved to Selymbria.[27] According to Chalkokondyles, Musa attempted to blockade Constantinople by sea, and the Byzantine navy led by Manuel "the bastard son of the Emperor John" was able to defeat him in a naval battle.[28] But the siege continued on land, and Doukas informs us that Musa burnt all the villages in the vicinity of Constantinople, whose inhabitants had been moved by Manuel into the city walls. We are also told that many Byzantines and Turks were killed in sallies outside the city walls, including the son of emperor Manuel II's interpreter Nicholas Notaras, John, who was captured and executed by Musa. The man's body was brought into the city, while his severed head was purchased by his father from Musa for a large sum of money.[29]

The occasion for Musa's attack on Selymbria that had begun by 3 September appears to have been an attempt on Manuel Palaiologos' part to relieve the imperial city by releasing Süleyman's son Orhan, thereby creating a diversion.[30] When he had renewed his alliance with the Byzantines in 1409, Süleyman had handed over his son Orhan along with his daughter Fatma Hatun to Manuel Palaiologos as hostages. Some have claimed that Manuel's release of Orhan was the direct cause of Musa's attacks on Byzantium, and that the Byzantines made use of the Ottoman pretender immediately upon Musa's accession in an attempt to prolong the Ottoman civil war after Süleyman's death.[31] While such a scenario is certainly plausible, there is no evidence to support it, as there is no mention in the sources of the Byzantines releasing Orhan prior to the siege of Selymbria. Had Orhan

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[26] Doukas 19:9.

[27] The dates come from Musa's treaty with Venice (see below).

[28] Chalkokondyles (Darkó), 166.

[29] Doukas, 19:9. On this incident, see A. Acconcia Longo, "Versi di Ioasaf ieromonaco e grande protosincello in morte di Giovanni Notaras," *Rivista di Studi Bizantini e Neoellenici* 14–16 (1977–1979): 249–279.

[30] *Symeon*, 49, 125.

[31] See Colin Imber, "Mūsā Čelebi," EI².

already been at large in the spring of 1411, it is unlikely that Musa would have had the freedom to undertake his early campaigns in Serbia, which are cited by Symeon and Konstantin the Philosopher as having taken place before Musa turned his attention to Byzantium. In fact, as we will see below when we discuss Orhan's bid for power, Orhan's activity reached its height in the winter of 1411–1412.

Konstantin the Philosopher states that when Musa went to the siege of Selymbria, he took with him George Branković, whom he attempted to poison along the way. As we have seen, Branković had showed allegiance to Emir Süleyman until the end, only submitting to Musa after Süleyman's death. According to our source, George Branković survived Musa's poisoning by taking an antidote. Meanwhile, Konstantin claims that Branković had anticipated a hostile act on the part of Musa, and had begun negotiations for a reconciliation with his uncle Stefan Lazarević, "for he was afraid that in the end he would be pursued from two sides." The negotiations were made through the intercession of George's mother, who was also Stefan's sister, and were successful. The two Serbian lords would later unite against Musa. In the meantime, George Branković had escaped from Musa and taken refuge with the Byzantines in Selymbria, while Musa took revenge on those of George's men who were unable to follow him into the besieged city.[32] As we will see later in this chapter, the Byzantines eventually sent George Branković from Selymbria to Thessaloniki on board a Venetian ship, from where after many adventures he was finally able to join Stefan Lazarević in Serbia.

As has been stated already, according to Konstantin the Philosopher, while Musa was preoccupied with the siege of Selymbria, his *beglerbegi* Mihal-oğlı Mehmed had escaped to Constantinople. When Mihal-oğlı reached the city, "taking with him the most select troops," the Byzantines gave him refuge within its walls and then ferried him to Anatolia, where he entered the service of Mehmed Çelebi.[33] Konstantin mentions that the inhabitants of Constantinople were occupied with the grape harvest, suggesting that the diversion at Selymbria had indeed relieved the siege of the imperial city. This idea is also reflected in the *Ottoman Anonymous Chronicles*, which describe Musa's sieges of Constantinople as a series of intermittent raids.[34] From these sources, it would appear that

[32] Konstantin the Philosopher, 43–44; Stanojević, "Biographie," 445.
[33] Konstantin the Philosopher, 44–45.
[34] *Ottoman Anonymous Chronicles*, 51: "Every so often, [Musa] would charge on Istan-

Musa did not have enough troops to pursue simultaneously multiple large-scale military operations.

As for Mihal-oğlı Mehmed, Konstantin the Philosopher states that the immediate cause of his desertion was that he had played a part in George Branković's escape to Selymbria, and feared retribution from Musa Çelebi. But Konstantin also suggests that the deeper cause of the *uc begi*'s apprehension was that Musa perceived his great power and reputation as a threat, and therefore sought to destroy him. Mihal-oğlı's defection to Mehmed is also mentioned in the *Ahval*, but the Ottoman account places it at the Battle of İnceğiz, Mehmed's first military confrontation with Musa. Nevertheless, the two accounts still appear to be referring to the same event. As in Konstantin's account, according to the *Ahval*, Mihal-oğlı asked Musa for select troops in order to carry out a special attack on the enemy, who is in this case Mehmed rather than Byzantium.[35] However this is not an important difference, since as we will see below Byzantium was Mehmed's ally at the Battle of İnceğiz and the battle was fought very near the city with the participation of Byzantine troops. The difference in the two accounts appears to be at least in part one of perspective: it is natural that Konstantin would seek the cause of such an important event as the defection of Mihal-oğlı among the Serbs and other Orthodox Christians (i.e. the Byzantines) from whose point of view he was writing, while the author of the *Ahval* would look for it among the Ottomans. As has been suggested, it is also possible that Konstantin has confused the defection of Mihal-oğlı with that of Çandarlı İbrahim Paşa. In any case, taken together these two sources lead to the conclusion that Mihal-oğlı Mehmed did indeed switch sides in autumn of 1411, and that the Battle of İnceğiz (whose date is unknown) probably took place around the same time.

In the meantime, while Musa's attacks against Byzantium were in full swing, the Republic of Venice finally succeeded in negotiating a treaty with Musa. At this point, a detailed examination of Musa's relations with Venice is in order.

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bul. But he was unable to make its inhabitants open the gates. He did not surround it with anything [i.e. siege machines], but kept carrying out raids."

[35] OA, 92b; Mz, 134.

Musa and Venice: The Treaty of Selymbria (3 September 1411)

As we have seen, after signing the Treaty of 1403 with Emir Süleyman, which was renewed in 1409, Venice had been at peace with the Ottoman regime in Rumeli in exchange for the payment of various annual tributes. But after Süleyman's death and Musa's rise to power, the situation had changed and the old treaty was no longer valid. The Republic's merchants in the Levant were in a precarious position, for following Musa's accession, some Venetian ships had been captured with their crews and merchandise. While Venice took advantage of the change in *status quo* to save some money by redirecting the unpaid annual tribute due to Süleyman toward other expenses, the Republic was understandably eager to guarantee the safety of her merchants, and wanted to resolve the situation as soon as possible.

Uncertain of Musa's intentions, the Venetian Senate delayed its decision on how to deal with him. Meanwhile, the *bailo* (Venetian representative) in Constantinople was instructed to assure the new Ottoman ruler of the Republic's good will toward his regime. By May of 1411, a decision had finally been made, and preparations were under way to send an ambassador to Musa's court in order to negotiate a new treaty. This decision was the product of much deliberation: as with Emir Süleyman in 1403, the Senate had first rejected a motion that Venice should attempt to seize Gallipoli from the Ottomans, with or without Byzantine assistance.[36]

On 4 June 1411, the Senate provided its ambassador Giacomo Trevisan with instructions for his upcoming embassy to Musa.[37] These instructions provide a rare glimpse into the complex situation in Rumeli as perceived by Venice in late spring and early summer of 1411, a time about which little is otherwise known. To begin with, the Senate advised Trevisan that given recent events in the area (*propter novitates factas*), he should use his own judgment in ascertaining the best way of reaching the person of Musa and accomplishing the objectives of his mission. He was to go to Musa himself in any way possible, with or without a safe-conduct (*vel cum vel sine salvoconductu*), not neglecting of course to take care of the safety of his own person.

Once he reached Musa, Trevisan was to congratulate the new Ottoman ruler on his rise to power and remind him of the good relations

[36] Thiriet, *Régestes*, 98–99.
[37] Valentini, AAV 6, 151–162.

that had existed between Venice and his ancestors. He was then to inform Musa that Venice desired to renew the peace treaties that she had made with his predecessors, especially Emir Süleyman. In order to gain Musa's compliance, Trevisan was to hint at the fact that various "princes and communities" (*principes et comunitates*) had proposed to Venice alliances against Musa, based on the perception that his position was weak. The above unnamed powers considered that Musa was new to power, and that he faced many grave obstacles. Trevisan was to assure Musa that Venice paid no heed to such proposals, and was intent on renewing the peace that she had had with Emir Süleyman and the other Ottoman rulers before him.

If Musa consented to a treaty, as was expected, Trevisan was to make sure to include in it the Venetian territories of Negroponte (Euboea), Pteleon, Argos and Napoli, Coron and Modon, Patras, Crete, Lepanto, Tinos and Myconos, as well as those in Albania. The Senate also insisted that it should be stated explicitly in the treaty that the aforementioned territories would not be harmed in any way, and that their inhabitants and their belongings would not be molested by Musa's people. Specific mention is made of the castle of Pteleon on the coast north of Negroponte, and of the stipulation that it should not be bound by any obligation toward Musa. The Senate stressed to Trevisan that peaceful relations must be guaranteed on land and on sea, inside and outside the straits, including the vicinity of the island of Tenedos. Trevisan was also to remind Musa of the fact that in the Treaty of 1403, Emir Süleyman had ceded the coastline across from Negroponte and five miles inland to Venice, and that this concession also needed to be confirmed in the new treaty.

On his way to Musa, Trevisan was to stop in Albania and obtain a copy of a document in which the borders of Venetian possessions in Albania were set down. In order better to carry out his mission, the Venetian Senate would provide him with a copy of the treaty between Emir Süleyman and Venice signed in 1409 by Francesco Giustiniani. These documents were to be used as a guide in composing the new treaty with Musa. In general, Trevisan was to try to obtain the same concessions from Musa as those Giustiniani had obtained from Süleyman, and to pay the same annual tributes: one hundred ducats for Lepanto, one thousand for Albania, and five hundred for Patras.

In order to guarantee the success of his mission, the Senate gave Trevisan the liberty to promise an additional tribute of up to one hundred ducats a year to one of Musa's "baroni." According to the Sen-

ate's information, the man most suitable for this purpose was probably "Michal bey" (i.e. Mihal-oğlı Mehmed) "who is one of the greatest *baroni* of the aforementioned lord, and who as we are informed would be most useful for this purpose in the case where you are able to gain his friendship."[38] However, the Senate left to the ambassador's discretion how to deal with Mihal-oğlı or any of Musa's other "baroni" who might prove useful to his cause. Most significantly, Trevisan was granted the liberty to decide based on his assessment of the internal Ottoman situation whether to give more or less of this bribe-money to Musa, or directly to his "baroni." Finally, Trevisan was to arrange for the payment of the annual tribute in August, as had been the case with Süleyman after the signing of the 1409 treaty, which had been signed in June or thereabouts.

The Senate then turned its attention once again to Albania, stating that in the past the Venetian notary Giovanni de Bonisio had made a deal with Paşa Yigit that the Ottomans under his command would protect the territories of Venice and her subjects there from the incursions of Balša and other enemies, in exchange for which he had received an annual tribute of five hundred ducats. While in Dalmatia, and again when he entered the territory of Musa, Trevisan was to inquire into the fortunes of Paşa Yigit, whether he was still alive and still the lord of Skopje (Üsküp). He was to try to ascertain the relative power of Paşa Yigit and Evrenos in the new regime, so as to obtain the same protection as Paşa Yigit had offered Venice in the past. In order to achieve this goal, Trevisan was advised once again to make creative use of his funds, dividing the sum of five hundred ducats among the two lords or offering it all to one of them as he saw fit. In order to aid him in this part of his mission, the Senate would provide copies of the document drawn up by Giovanni de Bonisio and of a letter sent by Paşa Yigit.

Later on in the document, the Senate added that if Musa insisted on the payment of the unpaid tribute of one thousand ducats due to Süleyman, Trevisan should tell him that the payment of this tribute had been contingent on the protection of the Venetian possessions in Albania from the incursions of Balša; and that since those incursions had not been prevented, the deal was therefore void, and there was no reason to pay the tribute. But if Musa insisted on the payment of Süleyman's tribute for Albania, Trevisan was to give in and promise

[38] Valentini, AAV 6, 154.

that he would arrange with the *bailo* of Constantinople for its payment. Furthermore, Trevisan was to remind Musa that from the unpaid tribute to Süleyman, the sum of 17,800 akçe (*aspri*) had been subtracted as compensation for the lost slave ship (*cocha*) and slaves belonging to the Venetian citizen Niccolò Barbo.[39]

Another problem was the city of Patras. In the treaty of 1409, Venice had agreed to pay an annual tribute of five hundred ducats to Süleyman for the city and its dependencies. Patras was not exactly a Venetian possession, since Venice had only been renting it since 1408 from its archbishop Stefano Zaccaria.[40] The Senate therefore instructed Trevisan to make it clear to Musa that the tribute of five hundred ducats for Patras would not be paid by the *bailo* in Constantinople, but should be demanded directly from the Prince of Achaia (*princeps amoree*) Centurione Zaccaria. But once again, if Musa insisted on the immediate payment of this tribute, Trevisan was to concede, while at the same time insisting that in the future the tribute would be paid by the Prince of Achaia and the Archbishop of Patras.

Finally, as in the Treaty of 1403, Trevisan was to ask Musa to include the Marquis of Bodonitza as a Venetian subject. The fortress of Bodonitza itself, which had suffered from Turkish raids even during the reign of Süleyman, had fallen to the Ottomans after the accession of Musa. The Marquis had died in the siege, and his son Niccolò Zorzi had been taken captive along with his uncle, the Baron of Karystos.[41] Trevisan was therefore advised to try to gain from Musa the liberation of Niccolò Zorzi, if at all possible, and his inclusion in the treaty.

In the case where Trevisan's mission was successful and he was able to conclude a treaty with Musa, the Senate instructed him to obtain from the Ottoman ruler orders (*literas preceptorias*, i.e. firmans) toward his military commanders (*capitaneis*) and other officials, informing them that he was henceforth at peace with Venice, and commanding them to refrain from inflicting any damage to Venetian interests. Upon his departure, Trevisan was to ask Musa to provide a messenger bearing these documents, who was to accompany a Venetian subject designated by Trevisan, in whose presence they would be presented to the relevant authorities. If Trevisan was unable to conclude a treaty, he was to try to

[39] For this incident see Valentini, AAV 6, 69. The actual sum due was 1,090 ducats (1,500 including Patras, less the compensation for Barbo's slaves).

[40] See Miller, *The Latins in the Levant*, 363–364.

[41] See Miller, *The Latins in the Levant*, 373–374.

secure a truce (*treuguam*) lasting for at least one year. The terms of the truce were to be similar to those of the treaty, namely that Musa's men would not damage Venetian interests either on land or at sea. As with the treaty, Trevisan was to make sure that Musa's subjects were aware of the truce with Venice.

If Trevisan was unable to obtain either a treaty or a truce with Musa, he was to inform the Ottoman ruler that he would convey his response to the Venetian proposals back to Venice, and was to express surprise given the fact that Venice's demands were reasonable and in complete accordance with the precedent set by Musa's ancestors. He was then to leave immediately for Constantinople and inform Venice of the situation as soon as possible. Upon arrival in Constantinople, Trevisan was to show the Byzantine Emperor Manuel II Palaiologos a letter of credentials provided specially for that purpose and start negotiations for joint action against Musa in the name of Christendom. According to the instructions of the Senate, the Byzantine Emperor had asked for three Venetian *nobiles* to be sent to him in order to discuss "matters pertaining to his empire and in general the whole of Christendom." Trevisan was to present his original embassy to Musa (which at that point would have obviously failed) as Venice's response to the Emperor's demand, and to state that he had come to those parts in order to bring about peace between Byzantium and Musa and offer whatever he could toward that purpose. Meanwhile, as these negotiations were taking place, Trevisan was to keep Venice as well informed as possible by means of letters. Once his business was complete, he was to return to Venice with as much information as he could gather about all aspects of his mission.

The list of documents provided by the Senate to Trevisan for his mission to Musa is very telling of how complicated and uncertain the situation in Rumeli had become by this last phase of the civil war. These documents included a letter of credentials for Mehmed Çelebi (*Chirici*) in case he and his armies had in the meantime seized power from Musa; a similar letter with no name, in case some other Ottoman pretender apart from Musa or Mehmed had managed to gain control of Rumeli; a letter of credentials for Paşa Yigit; and copies of several letters and treaties, including the treaty of 1403, several letters of Pietro Zeno who had negotiated it, the treaty of 1409 signed by Francesco Giustiniani, and documents containing the privileges and borders of Venetian possessions in Dulcigno and Antibari in Albania. These last documents would be provided by the relevant authorities in those

cities, at which Trevisan would stop on his way to Rumeli. Finally, the Senate's records inform us that Trevisan was to receive a salary of 250 ducats for the first four months of his embassy, and 30 ducats for every month after that. He was to travel on board the ship of the Captain of the Gulf (*capitaneus culphi*) and take with him Francezsco Gezo of Modon as an interpreter.

The records of the Venetian Senate suggest that before Trevisan could begin his mission, some important developments had taken place in Venice's relations with Musa's regime. By 7 June Venice had reached a preliminary agreement with Musa through the intercession of Pietro dei Greci. The captured Venetian ships had been returned with their crews, but the Republic was still trying to obtain compensation for the lost merchandise. By late July it was still not clear whether a formal treaty was in effect, and the Senate feared for the safety of Venetian ships sailing in the Dardanelles. By that time, Trevisan had reached Musa, and a treaty was drawn up on 12 August outside Constantinople (*al fanari de Constantinopol*), where Musa must have been at the time.[42] But because of some disagreements, the treaty was not signed until 3 September, by which time Musa had moved to Selymbria, and was besieging that city as well. Meanwhile, the Venetian ambassador had left, so that the final treaty had to be prepared by his chancellors and signed by the Captain of the Gulf, Piero Loredan.[43]

The treaty of 1411 was accompanied by a payment of tribute in the amount of 1,100 ducats. As for its clauses, like Süleyman's treaty of 1403, the text has survived in a Venetian version in the state archives of Venice. Unlike the treaty of 1403, there is nothing in the text to indicate that it was translated from Turkish. The text begins with Musa's customary oaths to his ancestors and to God, who is said to have sent 124,000 prophets to man, beginning with Adam and ending with Muhammad. Unlike Süleyman's treaty, there is no mention of an "altro gran propheta" who might have been Jesus. If we turn now to the actual clauses of the treaty, we see first a general promise on

[42] The location of *fanari di Constantinopol* poses a problem. The obvious interpretation would be that the treaty was signed in the district of Fanari (Fener) where the Patriarchate is today. But since this district was within the walls of Constantinople, which was being besieged by Musa, it is impossible that the treaty could have been signed there. Perhaps the treaty was signed on the Golden Horn outside the gate of Fanari (Fener Kapı), or at Fenerbahçe on the Asian side. See Janin, *Constantinople byzantine*, map 1.

[43] Valentini, AAV 6, 150–162, 167–168, 177–179; Thiriet, *Régestes*, 100–102.

Musa's part to maintain peaceful relations with the *doge* and commune of Venice according to the terms of the treaty of Gallipoli signed in 1403 with Süleyman, as well as to those of the one negotiated between Süleyman and Francesco Giustiniani (*Zustignan*) in 1409. The place where the treaty of 1409 was signed is mentioned as "Zangodirbugni," which does not correspond to any known location.

Let us now examine the more detailed clauses of the new treaty. The Venetians were allowed to keep all their territorial possessions and castles, including those in Albania that used to belong to George Strazimir and George Balša. For these possessions, the *bailo* in Constantinople would pay Musa an annual tribute of one thousand ducats due in August. Musa also agreed that Venice could keep the castle of Lepanto (*nempato*) but not the land surrounding it, except for the houses, vineyards and gardens adjacent to the walls. For Lepanto, the Venetians would pay Musa one hundred ducats, also to be paid in August. Together these tributes added up to 1,100 ducats. As for Patras, Musa would not receive the tribute of five hundred ducats directly from Venice, but would negotiate this amount separately with the Venetian *bailo* in Constantinople and the archbishop of Patras.

Musa appears to have respected the terms of his treaty with Venice, for in March of 1412, the Venetians were behaving as if they were still at peace with him, and in July of the same year, they were preparing to pay the annual tribute due the following month. In May 1412, the Senate defended its policy toward Musa to a Byzantine ambassador, through whom Manuel II had complained that the Venetian Captain of the Gulf had signed the treaty with Musa under the walls of a besieged Byzantine city. Venice's reply was that it was only natural to sign the treaty in Selymbria, since that was where the Sultan was at the time, and that Byzantium could also have benefited from such a treaty.[44]

But to the Byzantines, coexistence with Musa was out of the question. By autumn of 1411, Manuel was already in contact with Musa's brother Mehmed Çelebi, and preparations were being made for Mehmed to cross the straits and confront Musa on his own territory. The struggle for Rumeli had begun.

[44] Valentini, AAV, 139–140; Thiriet, *Régestes*, 98–109.

The Battle of İnceğiz (Late Winter – Early Spring 1412?)

Mehmed's first battle with Musa was the Battle of İnceğiz. Mehmed lost this battle, and was forced to return to Anatolia. The Battle of İnceğiz is discussed in detail by Konstantin the Philosopher and the *Ahval*, as well as by Doukas, who does not mention the battle's location. The *Ahval* makes no effort to hide the central role played in the affair by Byzantium. According to that source, after Çandarlı İbrahim Paşa defected to Mehmed Çelebi's court, Mehmed appointed him vizier and began to gather armies in order to cross to Rumeli. Mehmed was encouraged by İbrahim Paşa's reports that the *begs* of Rumeli were discontented with Musa's rule. When the prince's army reached the straits, he concluded a treaty with Manuel Palaiologos to the effect that he would maintain friendly relations with the Byzantines in the event of a victory over his brother, and that the Byzantines would transport him back to Anatolia in case of defeat.[45]

Doukas suggests that the initiative for the failed operation came from Emperor Manuel II, stating that Manuel, "observing the tyrant's cruelty and unrelenting hatred in his warfare against the Christians, sent a message to Musa's brother Mehmed, who at that time was sojourning in Prusa, inviting him to come to Skutari." Mehmed came with his army; Manuel crossed to Skutari and exchanged sworn pledges with the Ottoman ruler; and they returned together to Constantinople, where they celebrated their alliance with three days of festivities.[46] Konstantin also mentions the alliance, and all three chronicles make reference to a most friendly reception in the Byzantine capital.[47] Apart from the usual difference in perspective, our accounts are thus remarkably similar. Like the *Ahval*, Doukas refers to an agreement according to which, if Mehmed won, he would have friendly relations with Byzantium, and if he lost, he would take refuge in the walls of Constantinople. The resemblance to Emir Süleyman's arrangements before the Battle of Kosmidion is obvious.

Both Konstantin the Philosopher and the *Ahval* state that at İnceğiz, Mehmed was winning at first, but was defeated in the end. The *Ahval* also provides a number of important details about the battle, stating that the vanguard of Mehmed's army was composed by Tatars and

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[45] OA, 91b; Mz, 134.
[46] Doukas, 19:10.
[47] Konstantin the Philosopher, 45.

Turcomans from Rum, followed by "the army of Ankara" and a contingent led by the Turcoman chieftain Yapa-oğlı.[48] Doukas also mentions "a few Roman soldiers."[49] The *Ahval* states that Musa was defended by seven thousand *kuls* of the porte (*kapu oğlanı*) who were able to injure Mehmed and his horse, forcing him to return to Constantinople and from there to Bursa.[50] Konstantin adds that when Mehmed returned to Anatolia, Musa punished Paşa Yiğit and another *beg* named Yusuf by incarcerating them in the fortress of Dimetoka (Didymoteichon). As we will see below, the two Ottoman *begs* later escaped and joined the army of Stefan Lazarević.[51]

Unfortunately, it is not possible to date the Battle of İnceğiz with any real precision. Colin Imber has placed it in the spring of 1412, and has dated Mehmed's second failed campaign to autumn of the same year, without providing any explanation for his claims.[52] The campaign that ended at İnceğiz clearly took place after the beginning of the siege of Constantinople, which as we have seen had already begun in August of 1411, so it seems plausible that Mehmed's campaign against Musa might have taken place in autumn of the same year. As for Mehmed's second campaign against his brother, all that is known about that is that it failed due to bad weather and swollen rivers (see below). This makes it possible to place it either in late winter of 1411 or in early spring of 1412.

Stefan Lazarević, George Branković, and the Son of Savcı

Meanwhile, the Byzantines who had given refuge to George Branković in Selymbria sent him to Thessaloniki.[53] We know from a Venetian document dated 7 March 1412 that Branković had already arrived there on board a ship belonging to the Venetian colony of Crete, a fact that

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[48] OA, 92a–92b; Mz, 134. In their edition of the *Oxford Anonymous Chronicle* (pseudo-Ruhi), Cengiz and Yücel have mistakenly read "Papa-oğlı" for Yapa-oğlı. See Yücel and Cengiz, "Rûhî Tarîhi," 428.

[49] Doukas 19:10.

[50] OA, 93a–93b; Mz, 135.

[51] Konstantin the Philosopher, 45–46. Colin Imber, "Mūsā Čelebi" (EI²) identifies Yusuf as a son of Mihal-oğlı Mehmed. Konstantin the Philosopher calls Yusuf "the governor of the land of Konstantin," meaning northeastern Macedonia. It is probable that this refers to Yusuf Beg of Tırhala (see above, 127–128).

[52] Colin Imber, "Mūsā Čelebi," EI².

[53] Konstantin the Philosopher, 46.

Venice wanted to keep secret from Musa, with whom she had a treaty.[54] The transportation of George Branković to Thessaloniki appears to have been the outcome of a joint plan involving Byzantium, Stefan Lazarević, and an Ottoman pretender who was allegedly the son of Savcı. According to Konstantin, whose account is our only source to mention this incident involving the son of Savcı, the Ottoman begs Paşa Yigit and Yusuf were also part of the plot. As we saw above, after the Battle of İnceğiz, Musa doubted the loyalty of these two begs and had them imprisoned in Dimetoka. But they were able to escape and join the forces of Stefan Lazarević. Konstantin states that "each one abandoned his titles, lands and castles and took troops from [Stefan Lazarević]."[55] This is an interesting development, as it would suggest that the Ottoman *uc begleri* were commanding Serbian fighters on behalf of the Serbian despot, who was himself a vassal of the Hungarian king. Of course, Lazarević had also been a vassal of the Ottoman rulers Yıldırım Bayezid and Emir Süleyman, and at this time was probably already allied with Mehmed. The two begs may therefore have seen themselves as acting in Mehmed's name. In any case, their degree of independence is striking.

Let us now return to the son of Savcı. Konstantin the Philosopher tells us that when George Branković arrived in Thessaloniki, Stefan Lazarević dispatched his entire army there along with Paşa Yigit, Yusuf Beg, and the son of Savcı. Their goal was apparently to enter the besieged Byzantine city and join forces with the Byzantine despot John (VII), who was in fact the son of the deceased Savcı's ally and fellow rebel Andronikos Palaiologos. The "son of Savcı" would be presented as a legitimate heir to the Ottoman throne, leading to a military confrontation with Musa, which could perhaps be won by the defection of Ottoman troops to Paşa Yigit and Yusuf. But the plan did not work as intended. Stefan Lazarević's army reached Thessaloniki, where they discovered that George Branković, apparently unaware of Stefan's plans, had already left for Serbia.

But George Branković was unable to reach his destination, because the way was being guarded by "a certain man who had the same name as king Musa." This man is probably Koyun Musası, who appears in

[54] Thiriet, *Régestes*, 104–105. Apparently the ship was forced by the Byzantines to convey George Branković to Thessaloniki, despite a Venetian prohibition.

[55] Konstantin the Philosopher, 45–46.

the *Ahval* as one of Musa's closest associates.[56] According to Konstantin, Branković, wishing to return to Thessaloniki, had no alternative but to hide in the countryside disguised as one of his noblemen, while the remaining Serbian army under Stefan Lazarević pretended that he was in their midst and marching into Thessaloniki without him. George Branković was later able to rejoin them there, and they eventually all returned to Serbia together.[57] Apparently the plot to present the son of Savcı as a legitimate claimant to the Ottoman throne had been abandoned. But as we will see, Thessaloniki was later the center of a similar plot involving Emir Süleyman's son Orhan.

Mehmed's Second Campaign against Musa and Activities Before the Battle of Çamurlu

After describing the affair of the son of Savcı and the peregrinations of George Branković, Konstantin's narrative turns to a second attempt on the part of Mehmed to confront Musa and overthrow him, which is not mentioned in the *Ahval*.[58] According to Konstantin, it took place "in the middle of winter" (1411–1412?) and produced no results because the winter conditions prevented Mehmed from joining up with Stefan Lazarević in Serbia as he had intended. Doukas also alludes to this event, giving the impression that the aborted campaign took place shortly after the Battle of İnceğiz.[59] As has already been mentioned, like the Battle of İnceğiz, it is extremely difficult to assign even an approximate date to Mehmed's second campaign against his brother. From Konstantin's account, it would appear that Mehmed's plan had been to cross the Maritsa and march through the Serres region to Serbia, but that he was unable to ford the river, which was swollen by "a rain and snow beyond description," and was forced once again to return to Anatolia. Konstantin informs us that following Mehmed's aborted second campaign, "Musa had some commanders of that region condemned and executed, because they had concealed this campaign

[56] OA, 88b, 90a; Mz, 131, 132. According to the *Ahval*, it was Koyun Musası who strangled Emir Süleyman.

[57] Konstantin the Philosopher, 46–47. It is difficult to determine with accuracy when these events took place. Branković probably entered Thessaloniki around autumn 1411, and appears not to have left the city until after the end of winter 1412.

[58] Konstantin the Philosopher, 47–48; Doukas, 19:11.

[59] Doukas, 19:11.

and not informed him."[60] The *uc begleri*'s disloyalty to Musa is thus once again apparent.

Let us now turn to Mehmed Çelebi's activities in Anatolia prior to the Battle of Çamurlu. As we saw in chapter 4, when Süleyman crossed to Rumeli to face Musa, Mehmed became the master of Ottoman Anatolia. It is clear from the *Ahval* that Mehmed's realm at this time also included Aydın. For as we have seen, when Emir Süleyman went to Rumeli to face Musa, he took Cüneyd with him and appointed another governor to Aydın. This man was not strong enough to resist Mehmed's authority, and apparently accepted him as his new lord. But when Musa killed Süleyman, Cüneyd returned to Aydın in order to reclaim his former position there:

> During those days when Musa was anxious and apprehensive about his brother Mehmed, Juneid, unnoticed, fled from the environs of Thrace. Furtively he crossed the Hellespont and came to Asia. After he had collected an army from Smyrna and Thyrea, he went to Ephesus and decapitated the governor whom Sulayman had appointed and installed there. Shortly Juneid became lord of all Asia, even before Mehmed had arrived in Thrace.[61]

Thanks to the *Ahval*, it is possible to pick up where Doukas' narrative leaves off. Our source states that Mehmed received news shortly after his return from the Battle of İnceğiz that Cüneyd (İzmir-oğlı) "has appeared and has taken the province of Aydın, and he has attacked Ayasoluk and is besieging it."[62] From this passage, it is clear that Ayasoluk was in Mehmed's control.

According to our source, Mehmed confronted Cüneyd militarily at İzmir, while Cüneyd took refuge in the city's fortress and eventually submitted to the Ottoman ruler, who had in the meantime occupied "his entire province."[63] At this point, one may wonder how Cüneyd had taken refuge in İzmir's fortress when it had been destroyed by Timur. As we saw in chapter 3, in 1407 Emir Süleyman had tried to rebuild İzmir's fortress, and may have succeeded despite the fact that Mehmed Çelebi and the Knights Hospitallers had tried to prevent him from doing so. Another possibility is that the *Ahval*'s author confused İzmir with Ayasoluk, a confusion that might be due to the fact that

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[60] Konstantin the Philosopher, 48.
[61] Doukas 19:14. This translation is by Magoulias.
[62] OA, 93b–94a; Mz, 135.
[63] OA, 94b; Mz, 136.

he refers to Cüneyd as "İzmir-oğlı." In any case, it is clear that Cüneyd accepted Mehmed's overlordship—our source states that Mehmed "forgave İzmir-oğlı's transgression and made him lord of that place, assigning to him the entire province with the provision that the Friday sermon would be made in his name, and the *akçe* and other coins would also be struck and circulate in the Sultan's name."[64]

Another event alluded to in chapter 3 that also took place around this time was a falling out between Mehmed Çelebi and the governor of Ankara, Firuz-oğlı Yakub Beg. According to the *Ahval*, Mehmed had asked Yakub to join him with his army in his campaign against Cüneyd, but Yakub had refused, making the argument that due to its close proximity to Karaman, Ankara was too vulnerable to be left undefended. Apparently this argument was not persuasive, for Mehmed doubted Yakub's loyalty, and had his close associate Balta-oğlı imprison Yakub in the prison of Bedevi Çardak in Tokat. As has been suggested, Mehmed's suspicion of Yakub may have also been based on the fact that he had betrayed him once already, when he surrendered Ankara to Emir Süleyman.

Musa's 1411–1412 Serbian Campaigns and the Challenge of Orhan, Son of Süleyman

As we have seen, Stefan Lazarević had been Mehmed's ally in his second campaign against Musa. To punish the Serbian despot, Konstantin informs us that during the same winter [1411–1412], Musa decided to launch an all-out campaign against him. He returned to Edirne and prepared his forces for this purpose. At this point in his narrative, Konstantin provides a rare and detailed description of the organization and functioning of Musa's army, which deserves to be quoted in whole:

> Then [Musa] armed himself against the Despot… And he introduced the following arrangement. He had two select military divisions, and he called one of them "division of the raiders" and the other "division of the heroes." And these two forces always marched before him in the vanguard, leading numerous select horses with them. Now when he attacked someone, he first sent out the raiders, who rode day and night in order to take [the enemy] by surprise and attack him. But if they were driven back, then he quickly brought out the heroes, and they fought

[64] OA, 94b; Mz, 136.

> until he himself with his entire army arrived. And when the horse of one of the fighters couldn't go on, then he got off it and mounted another from those that were led along with them. When someone distinguished himself somehow for his bravery, this was recorded so that he could be rewarded with income. Similarly, in the siege of cities he had his firm regulations for rewards. Those who fled, however, were executed.[65]

Konstantin's account thus agrees with the claims of *Ottoman Anonymous Chronicles* that Musa relied on raiders, and was generous to those among them who proved their loyalty in battle. But the most important reference is to the recording of the names of men who had distinguished themselves in battle so that they could be assigned "income." The reference is probably to the granting of *timar*s, whose owners were recorded in a notebook called a *timar defteri*. As was mentioned already, according to Aşıkpaşazade and other Ottoman sources, in his revolt of 1416 Şeyh Bedreddin was supported by people who had been granted *timar*s under Musa Çelebi, but had lost them when Mehmed Çelebi came to power in Rumeli.

Having gathered his full army, Musa thus set his mind on capturing Novo Brdo, the richest mineral center in Serbia. But before going to that town, which is east of Priština and Kosovo, Musa and his troops spent some time in Sofia, where they celebrated their "great holiday." Here Konstantin is probably referring to the feast that comes at the end of the month of Ramadan (*Şeker Bayramı*), which in the year 1412 fell on 16 January. The date agrees with Konstantin's presentation of these events as having taken place in the middle of the winter, after Mehmed's failed campaign in Rumeli. According to our source, "when on the feast day all preparations had been made, [Musa] mounted his horse and said, 'I will celebrate the great feast day in this way!' And he set out unexpectedly from Sofia, went through the Čemernik mountain range, and rode without camping anywhere along the way till Vranje." When Musa's men reached Vranje, they sacked it and took its inhabitants prisoner. Then Musa attacked Novo Brdo, "but despite all his efforts accomplished nothing." Apparently Stefan Lazarević was in the area and considered attacking Musa, but finally decided against it because his army was too small, and he feared an ambush.

As we saw above, probably in the fall of 1411, Manuel Palaiologos had sent Emir Süleyman's son Orhan to Selymbria in order to create a diversion and relieve the siege of Constantinople. From Selymbria,

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[65] Konstantin the Philosopher, 48–49.

Orhan was sent to Thessaloniki, from where he launched a campaign for his father's throne in the surrounding Ottoman regions. We are fortunate to have a document issued by Orhan dated 26 January – 4 February 1412, in which the Ottoman prince recognized the privileges of the Athonite monastery of Hagios Paulos for a *timar* in the region of Vodina.[66] This document confirms the information in the chronicle of Chalkokondyles, according to which Orhan, after leaving Thessaloniki, headed for Verroia (Kara Ferye), winning over large numbers of Turks in Macedonia with the support of an Ottoman lord from Asia named Balaban.[67]

Chalkokondyles states that Orhan was heading for Thessaly when Musa apprehended him. According to Konstantin the Philosopher, who also discusses the incident, a large number of Musa's infantry deserted to Orhan during the confrontation.[68] In fact, it would appear that some divisions of Musa's army deserted while others remained loyal to him, since the struggle finally ended in a victory for Musa. According to Chalkokondyles, Musa was able to win Balaban over to his side and persuade him to hand over Orhan, who was strangled. Konstantin the Philosopher states instead that Orhan was blinded, while his highest-ranking supporters were killed and the deserters from Musa's army were pardoned.

Following the resolution of the Orhan affair, Musa turned his anger against Thessaloniki, the city from which Orhan had entered Ottoman territory. By this time Thessaloniki had probably been under siege for about a year, and Konstantin tells us that George Branković was still in the city when Musa arrived. Despite his anger, Musa was unable to storm Thessaloniki—the city's metropolitan Symeon would later claim that the city almost surrendered, but was saved by a miracle of its patron saint Demetrios.[69] George Branković's escape and return to Serbia must therefore have taken place after Musa's departure. After destroying the castle of Chortiatis outside the city, Musa departed in haste for Edirne, for he had learned that Mehmed was planning another invasion. In the end, the threat didn't materialize, and Musa decided to stay in Edirne and await the winter.[70]

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[66] Vančo Boškov, "Ein Nišān des Prinzen Orḫan, Sohn Süleymān Çelebis, aus dem Jahre 1412 im Athoskloster Sankt Paulus," WZKM 71 (1979): 127–152.

[67] Chalkokondyles, 166–167.

[68] Konstantin the Philosopher, 50.

[69] *Symeon*, 49, 125–126.

[70] Konstantin the Philosopher, 50–51.

But Musa did not remain idle for long. From Konstantin's chronicle, we learn that he had conceived of a plan to break Serbian resistance for good: he decided to deport the populations of several towns and settle Muslims there in their place. This remarkable passage can be translated as follows:

> But as far as Serbia is concerned, he set out on Christmas eve [1412] … and promised to destroy everything completely. For he had set aside many people from his dominion for this purpose, to be settled in Serbia … And so, animated by such thoughts, king Musa first went against the *voyvoda* of the castles of Sokolac and Svrljig, who had deserted him. And when he entered the region, he had the names of all the villages written on pieces of paper, and gave them to each of his infantry commanders so that they all gathered before the castle. He captured Sokolac and sent the *voyvoda* Hamza to Adrianople, and there he was executed along with the rest. Then he had the population of the land chased off and made them settle in his region, in the year 6921 [= 1413].

Konstantin's account goes on to describe how Musa carried out the same plan with the towns of Bolvan, Lipovac, Stala, and Koprian.[71] The reference to Musa writing the names of all the Serbian villages is especially interesting, as it suggests some sort of activity related to a land survey (*taḥrīr*).

Musa's second campaign against Stefan Lazarević and his attempt to change the composition of his realm through a policy of forced migration must have taken place in the early months of 1413. He might have achieved the goal of fully incorporating Stefan's land into Ottoman Rumeli, had it not been for the final series of battles with his brother Mehmed, which resulted in Mehmed's victory and Musa's death. Konstantin claims that Mehmed was invited to Rumeli by Stefan, who was unable to cope with Musa on his own, and that Stefan therefore sent a messenger to Mehmed's court via Wallachia and the Black Sea asking for his immediate assistance. In fact, Mehmed's decision to challenge Musa yet again and his final victory were the culmination not only of his own claims to the Ottoman throne, but also of the cooperation of all the different states and individuals who had felt threatened by Musa's rule. Stefan Lazarević was only one of these, but as we will see in a moment, he was one of the most important.

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[71] Konstantin the Philosopher, 51–52.

The Battle of Çamurlu and Reunification of the Ottoman Realm (5 July 1413)

As with the decline and death of Süleyman, the campaign that led to Musa's death at Çamurlu and the reunification of the Ottoman realm under Mehmed I is described in several chronicles and short chronicles. This is not surprising, since the campaign in question was decisive and involved more powers than any other single event in the civil war. As a result, we have the sources to reconstruct the buildup to Çamurlu and the battle itself in considerable detail. This is a worthwhile task, since by studying the alliances that helped Mehmed to defeat his brother and emerge as the winner of the civil war, we can understand much about the politics of the period as a whole.

Let us begin with the *Ahval*, which provides an extremely detailed account of Mehmed Çelebi's final campaign against Musa. We are told that after dealing with Cüneyd's revolt in Aydın, Mehmed returned to his base of Rum and began to make preparations for another campaign in Rumeli. Mehmed's father-in-law, the ruler of Dulkadır, offered to contribute a military force led by his son. The Dulkadırid prince and his army joined Mehmed in Ankara, where Mehmed's army was assembling. To honor his brother-in-law and celebrate the launching of his new campaign, Mehmed allegedly held a great banquet in Ankara. Standing before the gathered noblemen and military officers, the Ottoman prince declared his determination to defeat his brother Musa once and for all, promising rewards to those who would distinguish themselves in battle, and showing his disregard for material possessions by donating everything in the tent to the Dulkadırid prince and various other *beg*s. We will return to this passage in chapter 6, where its significance will be discussed in detail.

The *Ahval* informs us that once Mehmed had assembled his army, he left Ankara for Bursa, where he was joined by contingents from western Anatolia to form an army numbering ten thousand men.[72] When this army reached the straits, Mehmed sent word to the Byzantine Emperor, who provided ships for him to ferry the army across to Constantinople. Our chronicle states explicitly that Manuel Palaiologos gave Mehmed a royal welcome in Constantinople, during which he complained bitterly about Musa's hostile policies. In response to

[72] OA 95b–97a; Mz 136–137.

Manuel's complaints, Mehmed suggested that the Emperor join him in person against Musa, but citing his old age Manuel politely declined. Instead, we are told that the Emperor provided a military force of "many infidels" to accompany Mehmed on his campaign.[73]

On the question of Mehmed's negotiations with Manuel, the relation of the *Ahval* can be supplemented by passages from the *Ottoman Anonymous Chronicles* and Aşıkpaşazade. These are common to both traditions, but Aşıkpaşazade appears to have subjected them to a certain amount of censorship when compiling his chronicle. The fact that these passages in Aşıkpaşazade do not appear to have been written by the chronicler himself is all the more remarkable, as they immediately precede the most famous autobiographical section in the entire chronicle. This is of course the one in which Aşıkpaşazade recounts how as a boy he was accompanying Mehmed Çelebi's armies on their way to Rumeli, until illness forced him to stay behind at Geyve as a guest of Orhan Gazi's *imām* Yahşi Fakih, whose *Menāḳıb* he read and used as a foundation for his own chronicle many years later.[74] It would appear that despite the fact that Aşıkpaşazade was an eyewitness to the early stages of the campaign in question, he relied in order to describe it on a source also used by the *Ottoman Anonymous Chronicles*—but not without making a few important changes.

Let us turn, then, to the passages in question. In both Aşıkpaşazade and the *Ottoman Anonymous Chronicles*, the account of Mehmed Çelebi's final campaign against Musa begins with an order to his grand vizier Bayezid Paşa to inquire into the necessary preparations for a campaign in Rumeli.[75] We are reminded that in the meantime, Musa's grand vizier Kör Şah Melik had escaped via Constantinople and was present in Mehmed's court. According to the story, Bayezid Paşa summoned Kör Şah Melik and asked about the best way to cross the straits into Rumeli, and he replied that since Gallipoli was in Musa's hands, the only way to cross to Rumeli with an army was by making a treaty with the Byzantine Emperor (*İstanbul Tekvūri*). Kör Şah Melik's opinion was accepted, and the *kadı* of Gebze named Fazlullah was sent to Constantinople to reach an agreement with Byzantium.

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[73] OA 97a–97b; Mz 138.

[74] See V.L. Ménage, "The 'Menaqib' of Yakhshi Faqih," BSOAS 26:1 (1963), 50–54. See also Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds*, 96–106.

[75] *Ottoman Anonymous Chronicles*, 51; Aşıkpaşazade, 74–75.

The *Ottoman Anonymous Chronicles* state that Fazlullah was chosen for his good relations with the Byzantine Emperor, who considered him his close friend (*tekvūr ile be-ġāyet ḫōş idi, hem dost idi*). But Aşıkpaşazade's *gazi* sensibilities were apparently offended by the suggestion that a *kadı* could be friends with the infidel Byzantine Emperor, for his version states that "the *Tekvur* trusted [Fazlullah] because he was his neighbor." In any case, Fazlullah was able to carry out his mission successfully, and Mehmed Çelebi crossed with his army to Rumeli on Byzantine ships. Concerning the place of the crossing, Aşıkpaşazade and several manuscripts of the *Ottoman Anonymous Chronicles* state that Mehmed crossed from Yoros, the castle at Anadolu Kavağı; but some manuscripts of the *Anonymous Chronicles* state instead that he crossed at Scutari (Üsküdar).[76] Finally, unlike the relation of the *Ahval*, in this account there is no mention of Mehmed's reception in Constantinople.

Despite these differences in the Ottoman chronicle tradition, one thing is certain: Byzantine assistance was essential to the success of Mehmed's campaign. Only the Byzantines could ferry such a large army across the straits, as well as provide a safe place for it to assemble prior to the campaign and retreat in case of defeat. As we have seen already, in the past Manuel Palaiologos had allowed both Emir Süleyman (after Kosmidion) and Mehmed Çelebi (after İnceğiz) to take refuge within the city walls. Furthermore, we should also take the *Ahval* at its word and accept that at the Battle of Çamurlu, Mehmed's army probably included some Byzantine troops from Constantinople.

According to the *Ahval*, after leaving the city walls, Mehmed Çelebi's army followed the military route via Edirne and Sofia to Serbia.[77] Doukas claims that part of Mehmed's army was sent north along the Black Sea as a diversion and defeated Musa's forces in a skirmish, but this event is not recorded in any other source.[78] In any case, it is clear that Mehmed Çelebi's intention was to meet up with his ally Stefan Lazarević, who had gathered troops from Serbia, Bosnia, and Hungary, and whose support was therefore essential. As we have seen, Konstantin the Philosopher describes Lazarević's preparations in detail, stating that he sent an ambassador via Wallachia and the Black Sea to Mehmed Çelebi in Anatolia, proposing a campaign against Musa

[76] For four engravings of Yoros, see Semavi Eyice, *Bizans Devrinde Boğaziçi* (Istanbul: İstanbul Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi, 1978), 160–101.

[77] OA, 97a–97b; Mz, 138.

[78] Doukas 19:12.

and offering his assistance. Konstantin also states that "the Despot Stefan came from the west with his entire military strength, and what is more with powerful Hungarian and Bosnian lords, as well as with the aforementioned Ismaelite military commanders [Yusuf and Paşa Yiğit]."[79]

Meanwhile, the *Ahval* relates that while Mehmed and his army were camped near Vize in Thrace, they received a message from the powerful *uc begi* Evrenos Beg. Evrenos promised Mehmed to join him against Musa, and advised the Ottoman prince not to confront his adversary immediately, but rather to keep a distance until he reached Stefan Lazarević's territory in Serbia (*Laz-ili*). Evrenos also suggested that when Mehmed and his army reached the Balkan pass (*derbend*) near Sofia, they would be joined by contingents under the command of Barak Beg, Paşa Yigit, and Sinan Beg of Tırhala (Trikala).[80] It would thus appear that Mehmed Çelebi's arrival with such a large army had set in motion a process of negotiation for the loyalties of Rumeli's various *uc begleri*. The allegiance of Evrenos and Mihal-oğlı Mehmed was a great advantage, since these *beg*s yielded extraordinary influence.

According to the *Ahval*, the first skirmish between Mehmed's army and the forces loyal to Musa took place outside Vize. We are told that Musa's forces, which were under the command of Kara Halil, were routed by the vanguard of Mehmed's army under the command of Mihal-oğlı Mehmed. Meanwhile, Mehmed's main army under the command of Bayezid Paşa reached Edirne, where they began to make preparations for a siege. The town's inhabitants averted this event by promising to submit to whichever of the warring Ottoman princes was victorious in the end. Satisfied with this response, Mehmed Çelebi's army left Edirne and camped in the plain of Zagora (*Zağra ovası*). Musa had wanted to confront Mehmed while his brother was in the plain of Zagora, but realized that this was impossible and decided to keep his distance, sending spies instead. Konstantin the Philosopher confirms this information, stating that Musa marched with an army from Filibe (Plovdiv) to Makrolivada, where he intended to confront Mehmed, but was unable to do so.[81] Meanwhile, Mehmed's army continued to march westward, reaching Filibe and camping by a tributary of the

[79] Konstantin the Philosopher, 52.

[80] OA, 97b; Mz, 138.

[81] Makrolivada is near Haskovo in the plain of Zagora: see Soustal, *Thrakien*, 343 and map.

Maritsa called Değirmenderesi.[82] They continued westward along the banks of the Maritsa, and their rear was attacked again by forces loyal to Musa. We are told that these forces numbered two thousand, and were led by Paşa Yigit and İzmir-oğlı Hamza Beg, the brother of the famous Cüneyd. Mihal-oğlı Mehmed turned back with a division of Turcomans, which defeated Musa's forces in a great battle and rejoined Mehmed's main army just before it entered the Balkan pass. After camping in the pass, the army descended into Sofia.[83]

While Mehmed's army was in Sofia, Musa was detected again in the vicinity, but once more chose to keep a safe distance. Meanwhile, Mehmed's soldiers rested in the city and saw to their military gear. Then they continued their northwesterly march, passing through the pass of Şehirköy (Dragoman pass) and camping in the plain of Şehirköy (Pirot). At that time, Mehmed received news that Paşa Yigit, Barak Beg and Sinan Beg of Trikala were willing to join him with three thousand men. Upon receiving this news, he left immediately with his army, crossed through the pass of Şehirköy, and camped on the river Morava. The Ottoman prince was now in the territory of Stefan Lazarević, and sent his grand vizier Bayezid Paşa to inform the Despot of his arrival.

Mehmed's camping on the Morava marks a turning point in his campaign. Until then, his aim had been to move northwest in order to meet up with his main ally, Stefan Lazarević. Now that aim had been achieved. According to Konstantin the Philosopher, Stefan Lazarević had assembled "his entire military force" at Kruševac, just across the Morava from where Mehmed's army was assembled.[84] As we have seen, Stefan's army included contingents under the command of Bosnian and Hungarian lords such as Sandalj. Meanwhile, Konstantin informs us that "all of the powerful dignitaries of the Sultan also came there, in order to conclude and swear a treaty." The *Ahval* also speaks of this event, stating that Mehmed's army was augmented by the arrival of contingents led by Paşa Yigit, Barak Beg, Sinan Beg, and Evrenos. But Konstantin actually claims that Evrenos joined Mehmed slightly later, along with another magnate named Bogdan.

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[82] OA, 97b–98a; Mz, 138. It has not been possible to identify this Değirmenderesi, a common name for minor rivers, but it is clear that the reference is to one of the several tributaries of the Maritsa to the west of Plovdiv.

[83] OA, 98a–98b; Mz, 138–139.

[84] Konstantin the Philosopher, 53.

According to Konstantin the Philosopher, with the assistance of Stefan Lazarević and the *uc begleri* who had defected from Musa, Mehmed Çelebi tried to take the town of Koprian (Köprülü). At this time, the inhabitants of Koprian were probably Muslim, since, as we just saw, according to Konstantin the Philosopher, Musa had killed and deported the original inhabitants and resettled the town. As with Edirne in the *Ahval*, the inhabitants of Koprian refused to submit, but promised to accept the rule of whichever Ottoman prince won the succession struggle. Mehmed's army left and assembled in the plain of Ovče Polje, then crossed the Černa Gora mountains that separate Kosovo from Macedonia. Konstantin informs us that after entering these mountains, Stefan Lazarević turned his army over to Mehmed, appointing his nephew George Branković as its commander. He also mentions that "the Despot's troops were commanded by the Čelnik Radić, an exceedingly brave and clever man."[85] Konstantin's information contradicts the *Ahval* somewhat, since that chronicle implies that Stefan Lazarević was present at the Battle of Çamurlu. The *Ahval* does, however, mention the support of George Branković (*Vılḳ-oğlı*). Presumably the Ottoman source wanted to present all the Christian lords of Rumeli as loyal servants of Sultan Mehmed Çelebi, and it would not look good if one of the most important of these lords had more pressing business elsewhere.

According to Konstantin the Philosopher's account, apparently while still in the Černa Gora mountains, Mehmed Çelebi and his army were ambushed by Musa's forces, but to no avail for they were able to make it through. According to the *Ahval*, after Mehmed Çelebi entered Macedonia, he was joined by the Byzantine governor of Thessaloniki, whom the chronicle erroneously calls *Kör Tekvūr-oğlı* (i.e. "the son of the blind Byzantine lord").[86] This man was not, as the name would suggest, John VII Palaiologos, since John is known to have died in 1408.[87] In fact, the governor of Thessaloniki at this time was Manuel Palaiologos' young son Andronikos, with Demetrios Laskaris Leontaris serving as his regent. The military leader who joined Mehmed against Musa was

[85] Konstantin the Philosopher, 54. On the Čelnik Radić, see Elizabeth Zachariadou, "The Worrisome Wealth of the Čelnik Radić," *Studies in Ottoman history in honour of Professor V.L. Ménage*, ed. Colin Heywood and Colin Imber (Istanbul: Isis, 1994): 383–397.

[86] OA, 98b–99b; Mz, 139.

[87] See *Symeon*, 48, 120–121 and note 76. See also Nevra Necipoğlu, *Byzantium Between the Ottomans and the Latins*, 61.

most probably Leontaris, an experienced general who had supervised the return of Thessaloniki to Byzantium in 1403. According to the *Ahval*, in the vicinity of Thessaloniki (*Kör Tekvūr-ili*), Mehmed Çelebi was also joined by Cüneyd of İzmir's brother Hamza (who had presumably left and then rejoined them) with five hundred horsemen. Hamza Beg informed Mehmed that there were no more *beg*s left on Musa's side.[88]

According to the *Ahval*, after leaving the Thessaloniki area, Mehmed and his army passed through Harcabolı and headed north along the river Mesta (Karasu), camping on the plain of Alaeddin-oğlı and finally arriving at Çamurlu (Samokov) south of Sofia. Musa and his army were camped to their east at İhtiman. At that time, some of Musa's few remaining *begs* betrayed him, and he punished two of them, Tamacı-oğlı and Savcı-oğlı, by placing them under arrest. The rest of the *beg*s were angered by this and began to desert to Mehmed.[89] Konstantin the Philosopher states that Mehmed Çelebi's army was camped on the river Iskur at the foot of Mt. Vitoša, when Musa, who was camped near Štiponje, saw his scouts fighting with those of Mehmed; unable to resist, he attacked Mehmed's army, forcing the Serbian division to retreat. But George Branković arrived with reinforcements and engaged Musa from another direction, forcing Musa to flee in the direction of the river Iskur, where he was caught and strangled.[90] The *Ahval* describes these events in the following way. After camping in the plain of Çamurlu for two days, Mehmed's army was attacked by Musa's, which consisted of "Mongols" (probably meaning Turks and Tatars from Wallachia) and seven thousand janissaries (*kapı kulu*). Unable to resist Mehmed's far larger army, Musa was surrounded by Mehmed's Turcomans and Tatars, and was forced to flee. But his horse foundered in a muddy rice paddy, where he was captured by Bayezid Paşa, Mihal-oğlı and Barak Beg. Musa was supposedly strangled on the spot by Mehmed's *beg* Balta-oğlı, who was unable to restrain himself at the thought that Musa had killed Süleyman.[91] This is an unlikely scenario, but one that serves the narrative goals of the *Ahval* remarkably well. In the next chapter, we will examine those goals in detail, in an effort to ascertain what they can tell us about the political culture of the civil war.

[88] OA, 99b; Mz, 139–140.
[89] OA, 99b–100a; Mz, 139–140.
[90] Konstantin the Philosopher, 54.
[91] OA, 100a–101b; Mz, 140–141.

CHAPTER SIX

NARRATIVE AND LEGITIMATION IN THE OTTOMAN CIVIL WAR

> *Insofar as historical stories can be completed, can be given narrative closure, can be shown to have had a plot all along, they give to reality the odor of the ideal. This is why the plot of a historical narrative is always an embarrassment and has to be presented as "found" in the events rather than put there by narrative techniques.*
>
> Hayden White, *The Content of the Form*

As the reconstruction of the events of the civil war in chapters 1–5 has demonstrated, the succession struggles that followed the Ottoman defeat at Ankara are well represented in the contemporary chronicles and other literary sources. In part, that is because those years were very eventful for everyone involved. For the Ottomans themselves, what was at stake was their very existence as the dominant power in the region after a major military and political challenge posed by the powerful Central Asian conqueror Timur. The roots of Timur's challenge lay in the political legacy of Chingiz Khan, a legacy with which the Ottomans were all too familiar, since their own ancestors had come from Central Asia and entered the limelight of history in the aftermath of the Mongol conquests.

We have seen that apart from the outside challenge presented by Timur, after 1402, the Ottomans also faced numerous other challenges that were closer to home. These resulted from the revival of the *beyliks* of Anatolia, the strengthened position of the Christian powers of Rumeli, and last but not least, the internal divisions in their own society, whose roots can be traced to the reigns of Murad I and Yıldırım Bayezid. After 1402, Bayezid's sons were forced to win and maintain the allegiance of many individuals and factions, both internal and external. These included the Byzantine Emperor and other Christian rulers in the Balkans, the rulers of the Turkish *beyliks* and various tribal groups

in Anatolia, powerful Ottoman magnates and local lords of the marches (*uc begleri*) in Rumeli, as well as individual fighters and the general populace. The last category included the provincial cavalry (*sipāhīler*, *tīmār erleri*), the raiders (*akıncı*) and their leaders (*tovıca*), and the inhabitants of fortified towns, who were often forced to decide whether to surrender their town to a particular prince or his rival.

As we have seen, the Ottoman princes of the civil war adopted different survival strategies in the complex political world that followed the disaster at Ankara, as did their enemies, the *beylik*s of Anatolia and the Christian powers of Rumeli. Alliances were made and broken as the Ottoman princes attempted to gain an edge over their rivals, and their enemies tried to keep them divided. In the end, only Mehmed Çelebi and his advisers were shrewd and lucky enough to navigate the troubled political waters of the civil war. The purpose of this final chapter is to identify some of the means by which Mehmed Çelebi seems to have promoted his claims as single heir to the Ottoman sultanate and legitimized his elimination of his brothers. In the immediate aftermath of the Timurid challenge, it was by no means a given that a pretender to the Ottoman throne had the right to eliminate his brothers and other relatives, as was the case in later Ottoman history after the reign of Mehmed II (1451–1481), the sultan who gave to this already existing succession practice the status of dynastic law (*ḳānūn*).

For the investigation of the political attitudes that prevailed during the civil war and Mehmed Çelebi's response to them, one of our main sources is once again the contemporary *Ahval*, which was produced in Mehmed Çelebi's court during his lifetime. This source has already been discussed extensively in chapters 1–5, in which some of the main themes to be addressed here have been introduced. In this chapter, these themes will be studied in greater detail as they emerge from a broader investigation of the narrative structure of the *Ahval*. Further support is provided by the *Ḫalīlnāme*'s account of the Battle of Çamurlu, another historical narrative produced in Mehmed's court (1414). We will also be discussing the coins minted by Mehmed during the civil war, as well as his alleged correspondence of 1416 with Timur's successor Shahrukh, which is preserved in the chancery manual of Feridun. Needless to say, as we move into new and unexplored territory, the conclusions reached will necessarily be of a somewhat tentative nature. It is hoped that they will point the way for future research in a direction that is clearly rich in political implications.

Political Legitimation in the Ottoman Civil War

As was stated in the introduction, several Ottoman historical accounts have survived from the time of the civil war and its immediate aftermath. Some of these exist in their original form (Ahmedi's *İskendername* and Abdülvasi Çelebi's *Ḫalīlnāme*) while others have only been preserved as part of larger compilations and literary works. Of the latter category, the most extensive is undoubtedly the anonymous account of the civil war that we have called the *Ahval*, a source that was adopted by Neşri and thus passed into many later Ottoman chronicles and modern works.

Of the above sources, Ahmedi's *İskendername* was presented to Emir Süleyman, while Abdülvasi Çelebi's *Ḫalīlnāme* and the anonymous *Ahval* were produced in the court of Mehmed Çelebi. Ahmedi's section on Ottoman history has been dealt with in the introduction and has attracted considerable scholarly attention, so it will not be discussed here. It is sufficient to reiterate that while Ahmedi provides little information on the civil war itself, the mere fact that the poet felt compelled to include a section on Ottoman history in his Alexander romance implicitly criticizing the policies of Yıldırım Bayezid is in itself indicative of the prevailing political environment and the preoccupation with historiography following the Battle of Ankara. To many, the Ottoman defeat was a bloody testament to what they saw as the flawed policies of Yıldırım Bayezid, and his sons felt the need to legitimize their own claims *vis-à-vis* those of Timur and other Islamic rivals, such as the *beyliks* of Anatolia.

As Ahmedi's treatment of Ottoman history shows, and as is also demonstrated by Mehmed Çelebi's correspondence with Shahrukh, an essential element in this process of legitimation was an emphasis on the Ottomans' role as *gazi* warriors engaged in a struggle against the Christians. But at the same time, Mehmed also tried to show that he respected the Chingizid political traditions upheld by Timur and his successors, especially in the matter of power-sharing and dynastic succession. These efforts at legitimation are what the present chapter sets out to demonstrate.

There are many indications that throughout his reign, both during the civil war and after his victory at Çamurlu (1413–1421), Mehmed Çelebi (and his advisors) showed a preoccupation with various forms of political legitimation. Apart from the *Ahval* and the *Ḫalīlnāme*, which were produced in Mehmed's court and whose political ideology will

be examined below, other examples of Mehmed's preoccupation with legitimizing his position and his struggles with his brothers are his letter to Shahrukh dated 1416 (if it is indeed authentic), his inclusion of Timur's name as his overlord on a coin struck in Bursa in 1403, his pervasive use of the title "Sultan," and last but not least, his decision to (re-)build a mosque at Söğüt, a small town where the Ottoman dynasty supposedly originated.[1] Let us turn first to his use of the title "Sultan."

Of the Ottoman princes of the civil war, to the best of our knowledge, Mehmed Çelebi was the only one to make use of the title of Sultan on his coins. Even though Emir Süleyman reigned for nearly a decade, during most of which he was the most powerful contender to the Ottoman throne, he appears on his surviving coins simply as "Emir Süleyman b. Bayezid." The same holds true also for Musa, who appears as "Musa b. Bayezid," while no coins minted by İsa have survived. Of Mehmed's many surviving coins, some contain elaborate formulas which make use of the title "Sultan" both for Mehmed and for his father Yıldırım Bayezid, while on others this title has been replaced with the Arabic sobriquet *Ġiyāsü 'd-Dünyā ve 'd-Dīn*. Moreover, many of Mehmed's coins make use of the title of *Khan* for Yıldırım Bayezid, including the Bursa coin on which Timur appears as Mehmed's overlord.[2]

These coins provide the strongest evidence of Mehmed Çelebi's use of titles to assert his political claims. But in fact there is also other evidence from literary sources. As was stated already in the introduction, in the *Ahval*, Mehmed Çelebi is consistently referred to simply as "Sultan." Taken alone, this fact appears at first to indicate merely that the work in question was probably produced during Mehmed's lifetime, when he was the reigning Ottoman Sultan and it was therefore unnecessary to specify further his identity. In combination with the coins that we have mentioned, however, the *Ahval*'s use of the title "Sultan" begins to look more like a political claim. This would hold true especially if the narrative in question was begun prior to 1413, when Mehmed Çelebi was not the uncontested Sultan.

In fact, there are indications in contemporary non-Ottoman literary sources as well that, apart from the more common "Kyritzes,"

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[1] On the importance of Mehmed's mosque in Söğüt, see Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds*, 95, 178 note 105.

[2] See the chart in İnalcık, "Meḥemmed I," 974. See also Cüneyt Ölçer, *Yıldırım Bayezid'in Oğullarına Ait Akçe ve Mangırlar*.

Mehmed's systematic use of the title "Sultan" also resulted in his being known simply by that title. In his historical oration dealing extensively with the events of the civil war, the Archbishop Symeon of Thessaloniki describes Mehmed's rise to power after Çamurlu by saying that Musa was replaced by "another wild wolf sired by a frightful monster, Sultan, son of Bayezid." In his commentary, Symeon's editor David Balfour expresses surprise at this usage, stating that "Symeon calls [Mehmed] "Sultan"—using the word as though it was his personal name, although of course it is a title…"[3] Perhaps Mehmed wanted to be known simply as "Sultan," since that would make his claim to power appear more natural. Further evidence is provided by a similar reference to Mehmed as "Sultan" in the chronicle of the Tocco. According to that source, after Carlo Tocco made his marriage alliance with Musa "the Emir," with whose military assistance he was able to defeat his Albanian enemies, "the Emir" was defeated by his brother "the Sultan."[4]

From all of the above, one begins to form the impression that titles such as *sultan* and *khan* represented distinct political claims on the part of Mehmed and his advisers, regardless of whether they were used on coins or in literary works commissioned at Mehmed's court. Behind these policies, it is probably possible to discern Mehmed's grand vizier Bayezid Paşa, the patron of the propagandistic account of the Battle of Çamurlu in Abdülvasi Çelebi's *Ḥalīlnāme*, to which we will turn at the end of this chapter. A shrewd man of *kul* origins, Bayezid Paşa seems to have shaped Mehmed's policy during most of the civil war when the prince was still young. Bayezid Paşa's influence on Ottoman political ideology may indeed have extended beyond Mehmed's death into the reign of Mehmed's son and successor Murad II, since he remained grand vizier after Murad's accession until his death in 1423. In those early years of Murad's reign, another historical work was produced that clearly aimed to legitimize the Ottoman dynasty, this time through the use of Turkic tribal lineages and symbols. The work in question is Yazıcı-oğlı Ali's *Oğuzname*, which, while mostly a translation of Ibn Bibi's history of the Seljuks, also contains the elaborate description of Turkic tribes and symbols from Rashiduddin Fazlullah's *Ǧāmi'u 't-*

[3] *Symeon*, 49, 126. In the original Greek Mehmed is called "Σουλτάν ἐκ Παγιαζίτου."

[4] Schirò, *Cronaca dei Tocco*, 360–363: Καὶ ἐξέβην εἰς τὸν ἀμιρᾶν σουλτάνος ὁ ἀδελφός του. / Οἱ δύο ἐπολέμησαν καὶ ἐνίκησε ὁ σουλτάνος 'Contro l'emiro si mosse il sultano, fratello suo. / I due combatterono e vinse il sultano.

tavārikh.[5] But a detailed discussion of the *Oğuzname* would exceed the scope of the present study. Let us turn instead to the central problem for this period of Ottoman history, the problem of dynastic succession.

The Problem of Dynastic Succession

The struggles of the Ottoman civil war were above all a crisis in dynastic succession. Before 1402, the practice that Cemal Kafadar has called "unigeniture," according to which upon the death of the sovereign a single male relative assumed control of the entire empire by eliminating all other rival claimants to the throne, was already becoming established among the Ottomans.[6] However there had not yet been a serious succession struggle to test the limits of the system. Moreover, the situation that prevailed after the Battle of Ankara posed a serious ideological challenge to that system: after 1402, the Ottomans became at least nominally the vassals of Timur and his heirs, who upheld the Ilkhanid Mongol view on succession. According to that view, all close male relatives of the supreme ruler had the right to a share in government by receiving appanages. The classical Ottoman practice of granting provincial governorships to princes, which they ruled in the name of their father, represents a limited form of this appanage system. The key difference, however, is that upon their father's death, the Ottoman princes typically made use of these provincial armies and administrations in an all-out succession struggle in which the winner took all, and the losers lost their lives.

Despite the Ottomans' emphasis on unigeniture, their succession practices shared a common foundation with those of other Turco-Mongolian polities: the lack of a predetermined system of deciding imperial succession, and an emphasis on talent as demonstrated by success in the affairs of state and warfare (*devlet*). In an article comparing the succession practices of tribal Turco-Mongolian empires with those of the Ottomans, the pioneering historian of Inner Asia, Joseph Fletcher, has used the term "tanistry" to describe the Inner Asian suc-

[5] For the manuscripts of Yazıcı-oğlı Ali, see Paul Wittek, "Yazijioghlu Ali on the Christian Turks of the Dobruja," BSOAS 14.3 (1952): 642. For Yazıcı-oğlı's source, see W.M. Thackston, ed. and tr., *Rashiduddin Fazlullah's Jami'u't-tawarikh* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, 1998).

[6] Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds*, 120, 136–138.

cession custom, according to which supreme rule of the empire (i.e. the office of Great Khan) is not passed on from father to son in a predetermined way, but goes instead to the most talented member of the ruling family.[7] According to Fletcher, the problem inherent in such a system is how to determine who is best suited for the position, since all of the deceased ruler's close male relatives (usually his sons) are equally eligible, and each candidate is typically supported by some of the tribes or factions that make up the empire. Because of this lack of a clear system for determining dynastic succession, the contest for rule often results in bloody civil warfare between the candidates and their supporters, so that the final winner is the candidate who can exterminate his rivals, thereby gaining everyone's allegiance and renewing the empire.

According to Fletcher, more than just a change in the person of the ruler, the new Great Khan represents a new regime, since he is beholden to the factions that brought him to power. Sometimes the succession wars produced no clear winner, but resulted instead in the fragmentation of the empire. Fletcher attempts to apply this paradigm to the rise of the Ottoman Empire, seeing the Ottomans as a case of the imposition of a Turco-Mongolian tribal system on an agrarian empire, and discerning three stages in its transformation to a stable system based on taxation rather than tribal politics and booty. He places the civil war in the first of these stages, in which politics are still dominated by tribal elements, stating that from 1403 to 1423 the Ottomans "expended most of their energies *à la nomade* on succession struggles."[8]

A famous example of Mongol views on dynastic succession is a passage from Juvayni's *Tārīḫ-i Jihān-güshā* describing Chingiz Khan's succession. According to the story, one day Chingiz Khan summoned his four principal heirs and used two parables to show them how they should divide rule amongst themselves after his death. One of these spoke of arrows, which are easily broken when separate but can withstand the efforts of the strongest man when tied together in a bundle. The other spoke of a snake with many heads that dies in the cold because each head wants to enter a different hole, whereas even a very long snake can find a hole big enough for all its body if it only

[7] Joseph Fletcher, "Turco-Mongolian Monarchic Tradition in the Ottoman Empire."

[8] Fletcher, "Turco-Mongolian Monarchic Tradition," 245.

has one head. When taken together, the moral of these parables is that all members of the imperial family should share in rule, but that there should only be one Great Khan. Juvayni assesses the Chingizid system of succession and power-sharing as follows:

> […] And although authority and empire are apparently vested in one man, namely him who is nominated Khan, yet in reality all the children, grandchildren and uncles have their share of power and property […] Our purpose in relating this much was to show the harmony which prevails among [the Mongols] as compared with what is related concerning other kings, how brother falls upon brother and son meditates the ruin of father till of necessity they are vanquished and conquered and their authority is downfallen and overthrown.[9]

The irony here is that despite the influence of Mongol ideas, it was the Ottomans who were able to keep their empire intact for centuries, while Chingiz Khan's empire broke up shortly after his death.

The Ottoman dynasty was notorious for its practice of fratricide, and the civil war provides the first example in Ottoman history of its application on a grand scale.[10] When Mehmed the Conqueror specified in his famous law code (*ḳānūnnāme*) that "it is appropriate for whichever of my sons attains the sultanate with divine assistance to kill his brothers for the sake of the world order," he was merely legitimizing a practice that had been around for nearly a century.[11] In the civil war, in the matter of the succession—as in other matters—there was little precedent to draw upon. Despite the fact that Yıldırım Bayezid had killed his brother to rise to power, and had anticipated in many ways Mehmed the Conqueror's centralizing imperial vision, the premature collapse of his empire at the Battle of Ankara had unleashed anti-centralist elements, much as Mehmed's death did eighty years later. Moreover, Timur's intervention and the revival of the *beylik*s created an environ-

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[9] Aʿlāuddīn ʿAṭā Malik Juvaynī, *The History of the World-Conqueror*, *t*r. John Andrew Boyle (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1958), 40–44.

[10] A recent book on fratricide among the Ottomans is Mehmet Akman, *Osmanlı Devletinde Kardeş Katli* (Istanbul: Eren, 1997). Akman recognizes the importance of the civil war in Mehmed II's legal justification of fratricide, but does not give the period the attention that it deserves, devoting only three pages to it (119–122).

[11] The fullest discussion of the "fratricide" clause in Mehmed II's *ḳānūnnāme* is Abdülkadir Özcan, "Fatih'in Teskilat Kanunnamesi." Özcan's article republishes the entire *ḳānūnnāme*, including the clause in question, which reads: *Ve her kimesneye evlādımdan salṭanat müyesser ola ḳarındaşların nizām-ı ʿālem içün ḳatl itmek münāsibdür. Ekşer-i ʿulemā daḫı tecvīz itmişdür. Anuñla ʿāmel olalar.*

ment in which the Ottoman princes were especially conscious of the views of other Turkish and Islamic states on matters of dynastic legitimacy.

Mehmed Çelebi's Correspondence with Shahrukh

The tension between the Ottoman succession system (*töre-i ʿOs̲mānī*) and its Timurid-Mongolian counterpart (*töre-i İlḫānī*) is apparent in the surviving correspondence between Timur's son and heir Shahrukh and the Ottoman Sultan Mehmed I after the end of the dynastic wars. Shahrukh's well-known letter is dated 11–20 Zu'l-Hijja 818 (11–20 Feb. 1416) and begins as follows:

> To the great sultan, master of the kings among nations, killer of the infidels and subduer of the wicked, him who exerts efforts [*mujāhid*] in the path of God, the one and only orderer of the world and religion [*niẓāmu'l-mulk va 'd-dīn*] Sultan Mehmed, may God perpetuate his rule and prolong him in his royal beneficence. When this [letter] arrives, let it be known that it has attained our lofty ears that Süleyman Beg and Musa Beg and İsa Beg were in a state of dispute and contention with him, and that following the Ottoman custom [*töre-i ʿOs̲mānī*] he has freed each one of them from the commotion of this world [Quranic excerpt omitted here] But according to Ilkhanid custom [*töre-i İlḫānī*], this manner of action among dearly beloved brothers is deemed unacceptable, since a few days' worth of dominion has no permanency, that such actions be perpetrated on its account.[12]

A reading of the entire text of Shahrukh's letter in Feridun's chancery manual reveals that despite his reprimanding tone, Shahrukh's main target in this letter was not the Ottomans, but the Turcoman confederation of the Karakoyunlu, whose leader, Kara Yusuf, he was preparing to attack. According to that reading, Shahrukh's purpose was to ensure that the Ottomans, who had become stronger after the end of the civil war, would not support or give refuge to Kara Yusuf.

The fact that Shahrukh's letter to Mehmed Çelebi is only preserved in Feridun's *Münşe'ātü 's-Selāṭīn*, a chancery manual well known to contain among its many documents spurious letters ascribed to the first Ottoman sultans, may call into question its authenticity. But the date and historical detail in the letter suggest otherwise. As Halil İnalcık has

[12] Ferīdūn, *Münşe'ātü 's-Selāṭīn*, 150.

pointed out, the date of Shahrukh's letter corresponds to a shifting of the Central Asian ruler's attention westward. Around the time this letter was allegedly composed, Shahrukh also released Yıldırım Bayezid's son Mustafa in an effort to weaken Ottoman rule by presenting a challenger to the throne.[13] It is, of course, impossible to know for sure how much of Shahrukh's letter and Mehmed's reply to it as contained in Feridun is indeed authentic, and how much may represent elaboration or outright forgery. While the reference to a *töre-i ʿOs̲mānī* would seem at first too good to be true, in fact, the political climate of the time as we know it from our other sources suggests otherwise. For the sake of discussion, let us therefore consider that Shahrukh's letter to Mehmed I and Mehmed's response to it represent authentic documents.

Despite his strengthened position after his victory in 1413, the Ottoman Sultan Mehmed did not take Shahrukh's threat lightly. In 1416, the Ottoman defeat at Ankara was still very fresh, and although Timur's death in 1405 had allowed the Ottoman princes to change the Timurid *status quo* in Anatolia with impunity, the shifting of Shahrukh's attention to the west posed a grave danger. It must be remembered that Timur's pretext for attacking the Ottomans in 1402 had been the fact that Yıldırım Bayezid had given refuge to his enemies, including the same Kara Yusuf Karakoyunlu. In an effort to avert another disaster like Ankara, Mehmed replied to Shahrukh with a long and elaborate letter which is very revealing of the political situation at this time. The letter begins with an unusually long list of prayers and salutations, then continues with the following passage, which deserves to be translated in full:

> After the rendering of the services due to the Ilkhanids, [your ambassador] Burunduq Bahādur Khalkānī [numerous wishes] presented to this friend who is insane with love [i.e. Mehmed] the exposition of the considered opinion of the royal assembly [*kurıltay*] of the family of Timur [*gūrgānī*], which is contained in that exalted *yarlıġ* letter accompanied by the royal seal. When the health of the angelic-tempered one [i.e. Shahrukh] was indicated, [Mehmed] gave thanks to God. As for the counsel that was given on the matter of the brothers of the Age [*iḫwān-i zamān*], we are obedient [*farmānbarīm*]. However, from the first hints of the rise of the dawn of the Ottoman state [*Dawlat-i ʿOs̲māniyye*]—may God have mercy on their ancestors and perpetuate their successors!—[the Ottoman Sultans] resolved to take on the problems of the day mostly guided by experience. And there is no doubt that the totality

[13] İnalcık, "Meḥemmed I," 976; Woods, *The Aqquyunlu*, 44–48.

> of political power [*salṭanat*] does not admit division. In the words of the author of the Gulistān [i.e. Saʿdī], which are strung together like pearls—may God the King the Merciful pardon his sins!—"Ten dervishes can huddle together on a carpet, but two Kings don't fit in the same clime." Given this situation, security depends upon the peculiar fact that the enemies of religion and the state all around are constantly awaiting the smallest opportunity [to strike]. While the strength or collapse of worldly possessions does not depend on politics but divine predestination, nevertheless, if the neighboring rulers were Muslim princes of high lineage, there would be no reason to worry. Heaven forbid that the base infidels should obtain an opportunity! For as his Highness [Shahrukh] is aware, in the incident involving my deceased ancestor [Yıldırım Bayezid], many lands that had been won to Islam such as Selanik [Thessaloniki] and other places were lost from the hands of the Muslims [couplet omitted here] And that is the reason why in these matters of the sultanate and succession they [the Ottomans] have chosen to separate themselves from the rest of the world. And the best is that which is preferred by God.[14]

This passage is remarkable for several reasons. The inclusion of Ilkhanid Mongol terms such as *kurıltay* and *yarlıġ*, as well as of Timur's Chingizid claims embodied in his title *güregen* ('son-in-law'), shows a desire on Mehmed's part to demonstrate his recognition of the Mongol world order represented by Timur and Shahrukh. But the Ottoman sultan then makes a remarkable transition from recognizing the supremacy of that world order with its institutions, to explaining the special situation facing the Ottomans due to their struggles with neighboring Christian states, a situation that Shahrukh also acknowledged in his letter.

While it is impossible to know whether Mehmed's correspondence with Shahrukh is authentic, there is no good argument why it should not be so. The Ottomans had good reason to be preoccupied with Inner Asian ideas of dynastic succession after 1402, ideas that were also espoused by their neighbors, the *beyliks* of Anatolia. Moreover, as we will see in a moment, the same political preoccupations are also reflected in the historical literature about the civil war composed during the reign of Mehmed Çelebi.

[14] Ferīdūn, *Münşe'āt al-Selāṭīn*, 151.

The Ahval*'s Ideas on Dynastic Succession*

The *Ahval* is a particularly rich source for the study of political attitudes at the time of the Ottoman succession wars. As we have seen, this account was probably completed shortly after 1413, and was clearly meant for a popular audience. Close examination of this text reveals that it attempts to justify Mehmed's actions and successes against his brothers in several ways. By contrasting Mehmed's talents and virtues with certain character weaknesses in his brothers, our source presents him as the obvious choice for the succession to Bayezid's throne. Perhaps more importantly, however, the way the *Ahval* presents the fratricidal struggles of the civil war themselves is such as to give the impression that Mehmed had no choice but to act in the way that he did. By judiciously suppressing certain pieces of information and distorting others, the chronicle depicts the actions Mehmed had to take against his brothers in order to rise to power as both inevitable and justified by the moral and political standards of the time.

One idea that permeates the entire *Ahval* is the opposition of age with military and political talent. On several occasions in the narrative, Mehmed's adversaries try to present him as unfit to rule on account of his age (we must remember here that Mehmed was probably only fifteen in 1402). Mehmed's response to these challenges is invariably that he may be young, but that his youth is compensated for by his great charisma (*devlet*).[15] The proof of this charisma is Mehmed's repeated successes in battle.[16] The omnipresence of the theme of seniority versus *devlet* in the *Ahval* suggests that there must have been at least some tendency among the Ottomans of the period to support the eldest claimant to the throne. This is clear from the words that the *Ahval* attributes to Emir Süleyman, who was the eldest of the brothers:

> "I desire to cross to Anatolia and conquer that province too. For our brother Mehmed has been bad to İsa, forcing him out of his realm, taking the entire land of Anatolia for himself, and ascending to my

[15] See the confrontation with Kara Devletşah and Emir Süleyman's reaction to Mehmed's capture of Bursa. In the *Ahval*, the term *devlet* corresponds to the Turkish *kut*, i.e. what Fletcher calls "talent." For a discussion of this concept and its importance in the post-Mongol Turco-Islamic world order, see John E. Woods, *The Aqquyunlu*, 1–9.

[16] The notable exception being when Süleyman is in Anatolia and Mehmed must withdraw to Amasya. Then his failure is justified by the vast superiority of Süleyman's forces, a ruse of Süleyman's grand vizier Ali Paşa, and the "sleeping" of Mehmed's *devlet*. See chapter 3.

> father's throne. He is but a boy; since when is he suitable for the throne? Now it is my will that I cross to Anatolia and take the throne from him. If he wants to confront me, I will face him and do to him things that he has never seen before!" The begs and viziers replied: "O Shah! You speak well, but the matter is for God to decide. For even if that person is young in age, he is made great by his *devlet*. Whoever has confronted him in the past was eventually defeated, and he was able to fool Timur and avoid surrendering himself to him."[17]

The tradition that survives in Aşıkpaşazade and in the *Ottoman Anonymous Chronicles* also provides evidence that ideas of seniority played a part in the political culture of the civil war. According to that tradition, when Süleyman was enthroned in Rumeli, Mehmed sent him an embassy with a gift of two horses and a letter of congratulations, wishing him good health and calling him his new father.[18] When he received Mehmed's embassy, Süleyman sent his brother some slaves in return. What is suggested here is the recognition of the possibility of dividing the realm among the Ottoman princes, a division in which Mehmed would recognize Süleyman as his overlord (Fletcher's *Great Khan*). As we have seen, Timur at least ostensibly intended for Bayezid's sons to share power, and had granted diplomas (*yarlıġ*s) for that purpose to at least three of them: Süleyman, İsa, and Musa.

Timur's presence in Anatolia appears to have left a strong mark on the minds of the locals not only for its sheer destructiveness, but also for its impact on ideas of political legitimacy. With the Timurid invasion, the broader Ottoman world—a geographical space with a distinct history and political culture that had only recently been united into an empire under Yıldırım Bayezid—was suddenly thrust back into the mainstream post-Mongol Turco-Islamic world. It was only natural that such an event would reinforce already existent Central Asian ideas of sovereignty and dynastic succession. At least technically, Timur and his son Shahrukh were the rulers of Anatolia, and they considered the Ottomans and other Anatolian rulers as their vassals ruling in their name. As the eldest of the brothers based in the *gazi* borderlands (*ucat*) and controlling the bulk of his father's state apparatus, Süleyman was apparently seen as a sort of *primus inter pares*. This explains the pains taken by the author of the *Ahval* to justify Mehmed's actions against his brothers. Let us examine these in more detail.

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[17] OA, 70a; Mz, 117.

[18] Aşıkpaşazade, 72; *Ottoman Anonymous Chronicles*, 47–48.

As we have seen, Mehmed first came in conflict with his brother İsa at the Battle of Ulubad. We also saw that İsa had succeeded in establishing himself in Bithynia and Karasi in the fall of 1402, and had a *yarlıġ* from Timur to rule over that area. Mehmed's intervention therefore represented an attempt to change the *status quo*. How is it justified by our source? In the *Ahval*, Mehmed is said to have decided to head for Bursa while on his way to Timur, who invited him to his court after hearing of his military victories around Amasya. Certain unexpected events occurred on the way that forced Mehmed and his men into the mountains. While he was there, he found out about his father's death and was visited by Germiyan-oğlı Yakub, who informed Mehmed that before dying, Bayezid had asked Timur to give his body for burial to Mehmed. Allegedly in accordance with Bayezid's dying wish, Timur had left his corpse along with Musa in the custody of Yakub with the order to hand them over to Mehmed. What is implied by this account of events is that Bayezid essentially named Mehmed as his successor. Since the body had to be buried in Bursa, Mehmed needed to be the city's ruler or at the very least be allowed access to it. It is precisely such access that İsa is presented as having denied to him by closing off the passes leading to Bursa. Having encountered such fierce resistance, Mehmed was already justified in fighting his brother—but the *Ahval*'s author made sure there would be no doubt in his audience's mind as to the legitimacy of Mehmed's actions. As we saw in chapter 2, while the two brothers were drawing up their armies for battle, Mehmed's ally Eyne Beg Subaşı supposedly persuaded Mehmed not to confront İsa, but to write him instead a letter offering him Aydın, Saruhan, Germiyan, Karasi and Karaman as appanages in exchange for Bursa and its environs. While it is certain that at this time Mehmed was in no position to make such an offer, since those areas were in control of the *beylik* rulers reinstated by Timur, our source ignores this obvious fact in an effort to present its protagonist as a generous Great Khan offering appanages to a brother. It is İsa's refusal to accept this proposal that justifies Mehmed's decision to fight him.

As we have seen, it is impossible to accept passages such as the above as simple factual statements. Since at the time of Bayezid's death Bursa belonged to İsa, and Mehmed's position was weak compared to that of his brothers, even if the Ottoman ruler had the power to decide the fate of his remains—which he probably did not—he would have had no reason to ask that he be buried by Mehmed Çelebi. Instead, the whole story appears as little more than an attempt to justify Mehmed's

seizure of Bursa from İsa, who had a *yarlıġ* from Timur to rule that city. We also saw in chapter 2 that according to Yazdi, upon Bayezid's death Timur had granted another *yarlıġ* for the same city to Musa Çelebi, which Mehmed may have used to strengthen his claim over the city. Finally, despite the fact that Germiyan-oğlı Yakub was Mehmed's ally at Ulubad, we have seen from Mehmed's letter of oath to him (*sevgendname*) that Yakub was the more powerful party in the alliance, and would therefore never have accepted a proposal that would have given Mehmed's brother İsa control over his own principality. The only elements of the story that are likely to be factually correct are Mehmed's desire to take Bursa and his alliance with Eyne Beg and Yakub of Germiyan. The rest of the story tells us more about the political views of the *Ahval*'s intended audience than about the events themselves. What is clear is that at this time in Ottoman history, it was not taken for granted that Mehmed, a fifteen-year-old prince based in Amasya, could attack his older brother İsa and seize the Ottoman capital of Bursa from him without justification. In this light, the *Ahval*'s presentation of events seems calculated to provide just that kind of justification.

In fact, the *Ahval* presents the struggles between Mehmed and İsa as a series of efforts on the part of Mehmed to be just and forgiving toward his brother, who responds with repeated acts of provocation and treachery. Reading this account, one is made to feel pity for İsa, who obviously does not have the gift of leadership (*devlet*), but must instead rely on the support of other rulers who pity him. While Mehmed's superiority is taken for granted, he is also characterized as gracious and forgiving. As we have just seen, first he is willing to grant İsa rule over part of Anatolia as an appanage. Then, after İsa is defeated at the Battle of Ulubad and secretly re-enters Ottoman territory, the population of Bithynia tell him that he must first work things out with Mehmed, and that they will support the winner. İsa decides to winter in Beyşehir, from where he sends an embassy to Mehmed in Amasya, pretending to recognize him as his overlord and asking for permission to stay in the area as a guest. Mehmed graciously grants İsa's demand and provides him with a diploma to that effect, a gesture reminiscent of Timur's granting of *yarlıġ*s to his vassals. İsa, however, betrays his brother's hospitality by besieging and burning Bursa. After Mehmed chases him off, he takes refuge with İsfendiyar in Kastamonu, with whose assistance he launches another attack on his brother. Finally, Mehmed defeats an alliance between İsa and the western Anatolian begs, after which İsa "disappears" forever into Karaman.

Once again, in order to get the most out of the *Ahval*'s account, we must first try to disentangle the basic facts which were familiar to the chronicle's audience—and therefore difficult to falsify—from the elements ingeniously added or left out in order to produce the desired effect. As we have seen, the following sequence of events is likely: after his defeat at Ulubad, İsa took refuge in Constantinople. Shortly thereafter, through the intercession of his brother Süleyman, who had a treaty with the Byzantines, İsa returned to Anatolia with a sizeable army, possibly provided by Süleyman, took Karasi, and headed for Bithynia. For reasons that are not well understood, Mehmed was in Amasya at the time and could not confront İsa. After leaving Bursa, Mehmed's authority in the area appears to have been weak. This is clear not only from İsa's alleged decision to spend a winter in Beyşehir, but also from the claim that the local population tried to remain neutral. It is extremely unlikely that Mehmed would have granted a diploma to İsa allowing him to stay there. Instead, the chronicler appears to have distorted the events for several reasons: in order to prolong his narrative of Mehmed's successes, which ended after Süleyman crossed to Anatolia and seized Bursa and Ankara; in order to explain how İsa could have entered territory supposedly controlled by Mehmed and carried out independent actions there, which as we have seen included an incursion into Karaman; and finally, in order to present Mehmed as generous, forgiving, and willing to share power with his brothers.

Upon examination, then, the *Ahval*'s account of Mehmed's struggles with İsa reveals a wealth of information about power and succession in the civil war. In later Ottoman history, no chronicler would have felt the need to present a sultan as allowing his brother to stay in his territory "as a guest"—such an action would have been simply unimaginable. While the actions of Mehmed and his brothers reveal that, as in other periods of Ottoman history, during the civil war the system of succession was one of competitive unigeniture, apparently at this time it was not taken for granted that a prince could kill his brothers without justification. What is suggested instead is a system in which one brother is dominant, and the others rule appanages in his name. That Mehmed could not just kill İsa is apparent from the *Ahval*'s claim that after the final confrontation between the two brothers, İsa simply "disappeared." We will see in a moment how Mehmed's later killing of Musa is justified in our source.

The idea that it is wrong for the Ottoman princes to fight each other appears again in the *Ahval* in its account of Süleyman's invasion

of Anatolia. As we have seen, this was Mehmed's worst period in the entire civil war, since he lost control of Bursa and Ankara, and had to withdraw to his home province of Rum. In the *Ahval*, Mehmed's withdrawal to Rum is explained in two ways: Süleyman had vastly superior forces, and Mehmed's ally Toyran the Tatar deserted him. Of course, there is also the supernatural explanation summarized in the phrase "this *devlet* was sleeping."[19] But the most interesting justification for Mehmed's withdrawal from Ankara, the town where the fate of Ottoman Anatolia was decided, is the suggestion of a certain Akbel Subaşı, who tells Mehmed that "at this juncture it is impossible to do battle, for your older brother who has come is an Ottoman. Now the right thing to do is to make him compete for *devlet*."[20] By inserting this statement into his account, the author of the *Ahval* is implying nothing less than that Mehmed's decision to abandon Ankara to his brother was motivated by moral considerations.

So far, we have seen how the *Ahval* relates Mehmed's battles with İsa and his retreat before Süleyman's invasion of Anatolia. In both cases, what is stated more or less explicitly is that if at all possible, the Ottoman princes should have tried to reach a power-sharing agreement. Of course, even in the Inner Asian system there can be only one supreme ruler, whom the *Ahval*'s author considers to be Mehmed. Our source also emphasizes the importance of Bursa, which was at this time the Ottoman throne city (*pā-yı taḫt*) and the burial place of the royal family. As we have seen, the *Ahval* places much emphasis on Mehmed's enthronement ceremonies after Ulubad and on his burial of his late father Bayezid. However, the fact that there can be only one supreme ruler who is in control of Bursa does not imply that a claimant to the throne may simply eliminate his brothers. What is implied instead is that the other Ottoman princes should all recognize the supreme rule of Mehmed Çelebi, who, although not the oldest among Yıldırım Bayezid's sons, was supposedly the one with the most talent and celestial support (*devlet*).

An examination of the *Ahval*'s treatment of the career of Musa Çelebi reinforces this point. According to our source, after a failed attempt on the part of Mehmed to attack his brother's forces near Yenişehir, matters in Anatolia reached a stalemate. One day—our source is more

[19] OA, 88a; Mz, 131: "O Padishah of the World! Devlet has become friendly, and your sleeping destiny has awakened."

[20] OA, 78b; Mz, 123.

than usually vague about the timing of this event—Mehmed's brother Musa, who had been delivered to Mehmed by Yakub of Germiyan along with Bayezid's corpse in 1403, stood up, kissed Mehmed's hand and asked him for permission to speak. These were his words:

> "O Shah of the World! You know full well what things our brother Emir Süleyman has done to us, and how oppressive he has been. If you give me leave, I will go to İsfendiyar, ask him for a ship, and go to Rumeli. It is my hope that if God grants me the opportunity I will become a *beg* there. When my brother hears of that event, he will head in that direction without delay. In that event, you will become the independent Padishah of this land. If God allows me to attain *beg*-ship over there, I will have the *akçe* (silver coins) minted and the Friday sermon delivered in my Sultan's name, and prayers will be recited for the continuation of the days of his auspicious rule." After he had spoken those words, they swore an oath to that effect, and a treaty was concluded.[21]

As we have seen, Musa's crossing from Anatolia to Rumeli was realized through the mediation of Mircea of Wallachia, İsfendiyar of Kastamonu, and probably also Byzantium and Karaman. Leaving aside the question of Musa's alliances and early successes in the Balkans, which has been dealt with in chapters 3 and 4, let us turn now to his conflict with Süleyman, which has a direct bearing on the question of succession and legitimacy that concerns us here.

The *Ahval* relates that when Süleyman heard that Musa had gained control of Rumeli, he immediately appointed the governor of Ankara Yakub Beg as his *beglerbegi* for Anatolia and headed for the straits. In order to cross into Europe, Süleyman needed the assistance of the Byzantines, which he gained by ceding "some land to the Emperor (*tekvūr*) of Constantinople." By this point in the narrative, the *Ahval*'s author has already begun to paint a picture of Süleyman as overly civilized, and it is in this context that we must understand its assertions. Our source continues by stating that soon after Süleyman returned to Rumeli, he had an initial military confrontation with Musa (the Battle of Kosmidion), which he won. After this defeat, Musa took to the mountains and become "a bandit" (*ḥarāmī*), while a number of the *beg*s who had supported him returned to Süleyman. But in Anatolia, Süleyman's former vassals including Yakub Beg of Ankara sided once more with Mehmed, whose *devlet* was reactivated so that he was soon again master of Bursa.

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[21] OA, 85b–86a; Mz, 129.

As for Süleyman, the *Ahval* relates that after defeating Musa repeatedly and becoming complacent, he spent all his time in the bath in Edirne drinking wine and indulging in courtly pleasures. As we have seen, our source makes use of this topos to explain the fact that such important magnates as Evrenos and Hasan Ağa, the commander of the janissaries, abandoned Süleyman for Musa.[22] The various accounts of Süleyman's death, including that of the *Ahval*, have been discussed already in chapter 4, and there is no need to repeat them here. The important point to recall here is that in the *Ahval*'s account, unlike those of Doukas and Aşıkpaşazade which are otherwise quite similar, Süleyman is not killed by villagers but by the direct order of Musa.

Upon examination, the *Ahval*'s account of Musa's overthrow of Süleyman appears to be one of the richest chapters in the chronicle in terms of political implications. Not only does the narrative explain Süleyman's demise, but it also prepares the audience for what is to follow, namely, the struggle between Mehmed and Musa from which Mehmed emerged as the final winner and unifier of the Ottoman realm. Süleyman's reaction to the challenge posed by Musa is meant to reveal certain basic character flaws, which explain why he lost the throne. These are, of course, softness toward the Christians and an excessive love of drink and courtly pleasures. Like the *Ottoman Anonymous Chronicles*, which reflect the viewpoint of the *gazi*s of Rumeli and contain similar references to Süleyman's drunkenness, here the *Ahval* is obviously pandering to an audience of warriors and tribal elements. In the eyes of such an audience, the ideal ruler had the obligation to live a simple life, provide his men with raiding opportunities and share his wealth with them, and respect his *beg*s, without whom rule was impossible. In the *Ahval*, Süleyman is depicted as having failed on all counts: he made peace with the Christians, lived a hedonistic and overly civilized life, and ignored the counsel of his own *beg*s at decisive moments, publicly shaming one of them by having his beard shaven. Mehmed, on the other hand, is shown consistently as generous to his fighters, officers and allies:

> In the course of conversation, the Sultan warmed up, and gifted to Dulkadır-oğlı the clothes he was wearing, the horse that he rode on, and every sort of banqueting utensil in the room—goblets, decanters, and various other gold and silver utensils. And he donated robes of honor to his *beg*s and men, bestowing endless bounty on each and every one

[22] OA, 88b–89b; Mz, 131–132. See above, chapter 4.

> of them. Then the Sultan became passionate, and said: "Let everyone know that I am campaigning in Rumeli. I have a horse, a sword, and a truncheon, and they are enough for me! Whatever else is won is to be shared with my companions!" He stroked his blessed beard with his hand and said, "This time I will either take my father's throne or lose my head trying!"[23]

While Mehmed is frequently seen in the *Ahval* feasting with his men after a military victory, we would never expect to see him spending more time in the bath than was absolutely necessary.

Emir Süleyman's alleged character weaknesses notwithstanding, the *Ahval* nevertheless characterizes his death unequivocally as a vile act. The relevant chapter ends with the following words:

> The deceased had a beautiful countenance and a pleasant disposition, and was without peer in generosity and valor. Devoid of conceit and envy, to his subjects he was a well-meaning and just sovereign. So much so that the revered scholar Ahmedi gained fame during his reign, and enriched with his various gifts and favors, composed his Alexander-romance (*İskendernāme*) in his name.[24]

This surprising assessment is apparently meant to make us feel sorry for Süleyman, who could not help the fact that he had a weakness for wine and beautiful things, and was after all the victim of his evil vizier Çandarlı Ali Paşa, the villain of the *Ottoman Anonymous Chronicles*. The message is clear: while Süleyman's character weaknesses may have made him an unfit choice for supreme ruler, still, he did not deserve to die. Having given the order for Süleyman's execution, Musa is unequivocally blamed for his brother's death, for which he must pay in due time.

As was suggested above, the key importance of the *Ahval*'s attribution of Süleyman's death to Musa is highlighted by the presence of similar accounts of Süleyman's end in the *Ottoman Anonymous Chronicles* and in Doukas. In these accounts, however, not only is Musa not responsible for his brother's death, but he expresses rage when he learns of it. It is obvious that we are dealing here with variants of the same story: in all three accounts, Süleyman is captured by villagers, but the outcome is different.[25] In the *Ahval*, the event takes place in the village of Dügünciler-ili, whereas in the *Ottoman Anonymous Chronicles* there is a

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[23] OA, 96b–97a; Mz, 137.
[24] OA 90b; Mz 133.
[25] See above, chapter 4.

wedding (*dügün*) taking place in the village, and the guests (*dügünciler*) kill Süleyman without Musa's permission, and are punished with the burning of their village. As we have seen, Doukas' chronicle also contains the story of Musa and the villagers, and the Byzantine chronicler comments on Musa's burning of the village with the words: "such punishment did the brute mete on men, the first fruits of the evil deeds which he was to perpetrate during his lifetime."[26] For the Byzantine chronicler, of course, the evil deeds in question were the ones directed against the Byzantines and other Christians of Rumeli.

Let us now examine how our source deals with the problem of fratricide in the case of Mehmed's victory at Çamurlu, which resulted in the elimination of Musa. This is an event of key significance, since it represents the final act of the Ottoman dynastic wars as well as the conclusion of the *Ahval*'s narrative.[27] The death of Musa is the only case of fratricide during the dynastic wars for which our source even indirectly acknowledges Mehmed's responsibility, since, as we have seen, İsa is presented as having simply disappeared after his final defeat. In the case of Musa, however, it was impossible for the *Ahval*'s author to deny that he was killed as a result of Mehmed's victory, so he had to resort instead to other narrative strategies. One of these was to emphasize that Musa deserved to die for having ordered Süleyman's execution; another was to present Musa's death as an impulsive act on the part of one of Mehmed's loyal subjects. Let us turn to these passages.

According to our source, when Musa saw that he was losing to his brother, he shouted "O alas! *Devlet* has turned its face from me for doing such a thing to my older brother!"[28] But despite his remorse, it was too late for Musa to escape punishment for his crime against Emir Süleyman, which comes at the hands of one of Mehmed's *beg*s:

> He came to a place called Çamurlu where there was a rice paddy, where his horse sunk in the mud and he was unable to make it get up. He fell off his horse, and before he could say "I'll get on again," Bayezid Paşa and Mihal-oğlı and Barak Beg caught up with him, captured him, and restrained him by tying his hands. Then the army also arrived. Some

[26] Doukas 19:6. The translation is by Magoulias.

[27] Although there is another chapter in MS OA dealing with Mehmed's reign after 1413, it would appear that this was not part of the original *Ahval*, as it is much less detailed.

[28] OA, 100b; Mz, 140: *Āh dirīgā devlet benden yüz çevürüp, ulu ḳarındaşuma ben bunuñ gibi iş itdüm*.

> took pity on him, while others said, "The evil has been ended!" and were joyful. Balta-oğlı arrived and strangled him, saying, "What did you do to Emir Süleyman?" Then he brought him to the Sultan. When the Sultan saw him, he took pity on him and shed tears of blood from his eyes.[29]

It is noteworthy that our source does not present Mehmed as directly responsible for Musa's execution. Unlike the *Ottoman Anonymous Chronicles*, which make it clear that Musa was killed by Mehmed's order, in the *Ahval* he is strangled by one of Mehmed's *beg*s in an act of spontaneous rage for the killing of Emir Süleyman.[30] When Mehmed learns of the event, he sheds bloody tears for his brother. The conclusion that we are meant to draw is that Mehmed would have liked to have avoided his brother's death, but that Musa had it coming.

Needless to say, from a purely factual point of view, the *Ahval*'s account of Musa's death is not very convincing. It is out of the question that anyone in Mehmed's camp would have dared to kill his brother, a royal prince, without his permission. Rather than as a likely version of events, this passage should instead be read as a response to what appears to have been an abhorrence of fratricide during the civil war. In later Ottoman history, there would have been no need for such narrative devices, since the Ottoman Sultan not only had the right to kill his defeated brothers, but was indeed expected to do so. Instead, it has been argued above that the author of the *Ahval*, who must have been aware that Musa had been popular with certain segments of the population of Rumeli, made use of ingenious narrative ploys in order to legitimize Musa's death. To make its point, the *Ahval* is forced in several instances to depart from the standard account of events as it survives in the other chronicles. First, Süleyman must be killed by Musa's order, and not by accident. Then, Mehmed must not be the one to order Musa's execution. Finally, Musa's death must be presented as punishment for his unlawful killing of Süleyman.

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[29] OA, 101a–101b; Mz, 141.

[30] *Ottoman Anonymous Chronicles*, 52: "Musa fell. Saruca caught Musa and brought him to Sultan Mehmed. They took care of him at night in his tent."

Further Evidence from Abdülvasi Çelebi's Ḫalīlnāme

The importance of Mehmed's final battle with Musa and the need to legitimize his subsequent rise to power in Rumeli is underlined by the inclusion of a versified epic account of the battle in a literary work composed just one year after the battle. The work in question is Abdülvasi Çelebi's *Ḫalīlnāme*, a hagiography dealing with the life of the prophet Abraham, which, as we have seen, was commissioned by Mehmed Çelebi's grand vizier Bayezid Paşa and presented to the Sultan in 1414.[31] Entitled "Description of the Battle of Sultan Mehmed with Musa and the Defeat of Musa," this epic is the oldest known text dealing with a theme from Ottoman history after Ahmedi's *İskendernāme*.

The "Battle of Sultan Mehmed with Musa" is a fascinating piece of propaganda which presents Mehmed in an almost supernatural light, calling him among other things the *Mahdī* ('redeemer') who has come to administer justice and deliver the world from discord. In its details, it confirms our account of the Ottoman civil war as derived from the *Ahval*.[32] Its most interesting verses, however, are those that deal with the question of power-sharing and the conflict between brothers during the civil war. The first of these refer to Emir Süleyman's early successes and struggles with his brothers, criticizing Süleyman for his greed in wanting the whole of his father's realm for himself:

> But an older brother of his [Emir Süleyman] had taken it
> He was saying "I will hold this world!"
> "Whatever there is must be in my command
> What of İsa, Mehmed and Musa?"[33]

As in the *Ahval*, what is implied is that the Ottoman princes should have cooperated and shared power amongst themselves. This does not mean, of course, that they should all have had an equal share in this power. Our text makes this clear by referring to Mehmed as "Sultan," by emphasizing his charisma (*devlet*), and by presenting him as Yıldırım Bayezid's chosen heir:

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[31] For a detailed description of the *Ḫalīlnāme*, see the introduction to the present work. For a full translation of the relevant section, see the appendix.

[32] See, for example, verses 1448–1761, which contain a summarized description of the entire civil war up to the eve of the Battle of Çamurlu.

[33] *Ḫalīlnāme*, 1750–1751.

Wherever he goes, with divine assistance he conquers provinces
Whenever he makes it his goal, begs submit to him
A Great Khan, of great lineage and great *devlet*
That is the proof that he is the Mahdī!
.....
He had become Sultan of this land of Rum
The people of this land had become glad with him
The land of Osman was his inheritance from his father
From God, according to religious law (*şer'*)[34]

Abdülvasi Çelebi then moves on to the main topic of the poem, namely, Mehmed's struggle with Musa which resulted in his victory at Çamurlu. He first sets the scene by presenting Musa as power-hungry, treacherous, and unsatisfied with ruling Rumeli in Mehmed's name:

But he changed his face (betrayed his oath); now he wants his father's throne!
Just his father's throne? He wants the fortune of the world![35]

Moreover, like Emir Süleyman, we are told that Musa wants to cross the straits and take everything for himself, believing that if he sets his mind to it he can even conquer the Kaaba in Mekka.[36] Faced with his brother's ill intentions, Mehmed has no choice but to cross the straits first. Despite his brother's superior forces and the strange lands through which he must pass, which are presented as inhabited by terrible, supernatural creatures, Mehmed is able to emerge victorious in the end.

It is obvious that in his presentation of the Battle of Çamurlu, Abdülvasi Çelebi was not really concerned with historical fact. Unlike the *Ahval*, a work that was also composed with a political agenda but which achieves that agenda by purporting to present events in a chronicle style as they really happened, Abdülvasi Çelebi's "Battle of Sultan Mehmed with Musa" is a piece of panegyric poetry, and as such conforms to very different literary conventions. These differences notwithstanding, on the controversial question of dynastic succession, the two works bear a remarkable resemblance. Like the *Ahval*, the *Ḫalīlnāme* suggests that the best way to have avoided the bloody succession struggles of the civil war would have been for each of Bayezid's sons to have gotten his share of what was left of the empire. However, this was made impos-

[34] *Ḫalīlnāme*, 1743–1744, 1748–1749.
[35] *Ḫalīlnāme*, 1763.
[36] *Ḫalīlnāme*, 1770.

sible by the fact that İsa, Süleyman, and Musa selfishly wanted it all for themselves. Under those circumstances, Mehmed Çelebi, who may have been young but was clearly the most fit to succeed his father as supreme ruler, had no choice but to defend his rightful position against the attacks of his brothers. Mehmed also had a legal argument: both sources portray Musa as betraying his oath that he would rule Rumeli in Mehmed's name, an act of insubordination that justifies Mehmed's efforts to remove him from power there.

Let us return briefly to the question of fratricide. As we have seen already, the *Ahval* frowns on this practice, and does not hold Mehmed directly responsible for the deaths of any of his brothers. While the *Ḫalīlnāme* does not make any apologies for the killing of Musa, saying that Evrenos "grabbed the collar of the enemy and brought him," thereby "finish(ing) off the job of healing the world," Mehmed Çelebi is nevertheless shown as making every possible effort to avoid confronting his brother.[37] According to our source, even when he was forced to cross into Rumeli to deal with Musa's insubordination, Mehmed still did not want to kill him. We are made to believe that if only Musa had surrendered to his older brother, he would have been forgiven. Instead, he persisted in his rebellious behavior and got what he deserved:

> It wasn't necessary for (Musa) to speak such words!
> He shouldn't have stood against his older brother!
> It would have been better if he hadn't shown his older brother disrespect
> Since *they* were there (i.e. Mehmed and his army), it would have been better if (Musa) hadn't come!
> Now suppose that Musa was famous for his manliness
> Mehmed's manliness was one thousand times greater!
> .....
> Although *devlet* existed in Musa,
> The *devlet* of Mehmed was truly greater!
> .....
> [Mehmed] said: "Better that this brother had not come!
> But since he has, what can we do, let God (*tengri*) be our comrade!"[38]

What is suggested by the above verses is that while fratricide is best avoided, it may be justified in cases of insubordination in order to preserve the order of the world, in which the most talented and just member of the royal family must hold supreme power. In the *Ḫalīlnāme*, Süleyman and Musa are both referred to as "khan" (a common word

[37] *Ḫalīlnāme*, 1875.
[38] *Ḫalīlnāme*, 1825–1827, 1830, 1833.

for ruler in Old Anatolian Turkish), but only Mehmed is called "Sultan," a title used by both Yıldırım Bayezid and Mehmed Çelebi that reflected serious political claims. The idea behind the distinction is that while Mehmed is the only legitimate heir to Bayezid, but that his brothers also had a right to a part in the rule of the empire, a right which they forfeited by demanding it all for themselves.

In conclusion, contemporary sources produced in Mehmed Çelebi's court suggest that Ottoman attitudes on succession during the civil war differed significantly from those of the time of Mehmed the Conqueror fifty years later, even if actual practices did not. Joseph Fletcher is correct in comparing the Ottomans to Inner Asian tribal empires, for the basic principle of their succession system—the rule of the most talented member of the royal family—was the same. However, the policies of the rival princes differed from the Inner Asian paradigm in one important respect: each prince aimed at becoming his father's sole successor, even at the cost of eliminating his brothers. From the real historical events as we know them, there is no evidence to suggest otherwise. What the sources do suggest, however, is that during the civil war there was a widespread disapproval of fratricide. Of the Ottoman princes of the civil war, at least Mehmed Çelebi felt the need to justify his actions through historical narratives, in which he was represented as trying to adhere to the idea of power-sharing among members of the Ottoman dynasty. This idea had probably been introduced (or at least revived) by Timur's victory at Ankara, and by his subsequent policy of dividing up Anatolia among his vassals. In other words, although in their fratricidal struggles the warring Ottoman princes of the civil war were clearly following the *töre-i ʿOs̱mānī*, at least one of them showed an awareness that the *töre-i İlḫānī* was believed to be more just.

APPENDIX

TRANSLATION OF ABDÜLVĀSİ ÇELEBİ, ḤALĪLNĀME, "THE BATTLE OF SULTAN MEHMED WITH MUSA AND THE DEFEAT OF MUSA"

Original in Ayhan Güldaş, *Hâlilname* (sic) (Ankara 1996), 254–278.

[The preceding verses describe the victory of the just Abraham (*İbrāhīm*) over the unjust Nimrod (*Nemrūd*)]

1731 *The following is a description of the battle of Sultan Mehmed with Musa and the defeat of Musa*
1732 Just so did our king, that great sultan
That beautiful khan, that son of great sultans
1733 The mine of nobility, the quarry of justice
The mine of generosity, the pillar of valor
1734 Whose hands are helped by God, the victorious sultan
The king of illustrious ancestors, the greatest of khans
1735 Whose name is Muhammad, who like Abraham is a true friend of God
Who is stately like Solomon, and good and auspicious like Joseph
1736 A mine of chivalry, a copious spring
In whose person munificence is always present
1737 Only the prophets are his equals in valor
Only the saints are like him in vigor
1738 God made him an unmixed good
He made him king of this world, in order to heal it
1739 Justice had disappeared, but now has returned
The world is well-managed, and now wears a smile
1740 Could this man who healed the world be the *Mahdī*?
Men have found joy, and all sadness is gone
1741 If this is not the *Mahdī*, then who is the *Mahdī*?
He has made a cradle for the child of justice
1742 The cosmos is joyful, the world is well-administered
This is a sign of the *Mahdī*, whose disposition is famous
1743 Wherever he goes, with divine assistance he conquers provinces
Whenever he makes it his goal, begs submit to him

1744 A great khan, of great lineage and great *devlet*
That is the proof that he is the *Mahdī*!
1745 His name is Muhammad, his custom religious law (*şerīʿat*)
If the *Mahdī* appears, then so does divine truth!
1746 O God, make this world obedient to him!
May all that he commands be divinely facilitated!
1747 Make the whole world flourish with him!
Make his generosity famous for ever!
1748 He had become sultan of this land of Rum
The people of this land had become glad with him
1749 The land of Osman was his inheritance from his father
From God, according to religious law (*şerʿ*)
1750 But an older brother of his [Emir Süleyman] had taken it
He was saying "I will hold this world!"
1751 "Whatever there is must be in my command
What of İsa, Mehmed and Musa?"
1752 He had a sword, but didn't behave right
Now let the land come to him who behaves right!
1753 He said "What brothers? My father's place is mine!"
And took [Mehmed's] land, and came and took his place
1754 The Sultan heard this, and marched against him
They confronted each other in Ankara
1755 [Süleyman] could not bear [Mehmed's] advance, and fled
He left the land of Osman and crossed to the borderlands (*ucāt*)
1756 The Sultan marched, and occupied all of that province
Such was the will of Osman and Orhan
1757 The souls of those *gazi beg*s were glad
The province became prosperous, and was conquered (*buldı fütūḥı*)
1758 He took his father's throne, only the borderlands remained
Preparations were made to conquer those too
1759 When his two brothers got there [to Rumili]
They roamed around like two dragons
1760 At that time, there was a lot of turmoil
There is no need to explain it here
1761 One of them was killed, and the other became Sultan
In those borderlands, a great king and khan

1762 When Emir Süleyman and İsa were gone,
Musa became a king like Solomon on the other side [*ısra yir*]
1763 But he changed his face [betrayed his oath]; now he wants his father's throne!
Just his father's throne? He wants the fortune of the world!
1764 He wants to cross to this side and conquer the world
He doesn't like the ruler [*ḫan*] on the other side
1765 The gifts and property he received made him conceited
He wants to make his bid for the great *devlet* (*ulu devlet*)
1766 It's true that he had grown up with *devlet*
He had grown up with the generosity of this king! [i.e. in Mehmed's court]
1767 As soon as he had taken that province [Rumili] by his [Mehmed's] order,
As soon as he became Khan, he had a change of heart!
1768 He tells those who come to him "I took it with my sword
This here land is mine, I have conquered it all!"
1769 "And that land [Anatolia] is mine too, now I'll cross
When I start marching there, who will stand against me?"
1770 "If I gather troops, I'll have one hundred thousand men
Once I go there, my business will even take me to the Kaaba!"
1771 When that Khan decided to cross to the other side,
This Sultan on the other side heard of it
1772 He ordered "Before he crosses, let us cross first!
Let's march fast, let's not worry about gathering an army!"
1773 "He who takes a step forward is a brave man
When the enemy faces such a man, he must take him seriously!"
1774 "So what if they are many and we are few
A falcon can drive away one thousand partridges!"
1775 The viziers said "O Sultan of the World!
To cross the sea takes many men!
1776 He has more than eighty thousand warriors
His soldiers are armed, ready, and experienced in battle
1777 But our army has not yet been assembled
The great *beg*s from far away have not yet arrived

1778 If eight thousand men go and face eighty thousand,
What good can they do? What will come of it?"
1779 Then that valorous Sultan gave an order
"Let us go, and let our prayers to God give us victory!
1780 The army of prayers is with us, and that's enough
The door of prayer is open in our direction!
1781 Since the rich and the poor are praying for us
Count their prayers too among my army
1782 Every child of *devlet* is born from prayers
The cypress of felicity sprouts from prayers
1783 It is prayers that protect the throne of the world from danger
Prayers that guard the fortune of men from evil
1784 It is through prayers that life is prolongued
And prayers are what is needed for knowledge and memory!"
1785 Placing the prayers before him, that king set out
And all of a sudden, he was back in Constantinople
1786 As he was moving, the Emperor of Constantinople heard
He came and offered his services, showing his delight
1787 In one or two days, they had crossed the sea
They rode, and cast their trail toward Edirne
1788 For five or ten days, they marched within that province
Everywhere he [Mehmed] went, he made laws (*yasaġ*) for justice
1789 Moving forward, he reached the land of Lazar [Serbia] and Wallachia
He wandered around in provinces with very harsh terrain
1790 What valor! What vigour! What bravery!
When the Sultan made that place his residence
1791 A foreign land, whose places and roads were unknown
The population scattered and took flight, and no provisions could be found
1792 The enemy gathered, over eighty thousand
The provincial population that was to receive [Mehmed] scattered
1793 Under those circumstances, Alexander would not have stayed there!
If it had been Caesar, he wouldn't have stayed there either!
1794 If Zahhak had come there in those conditions,
Out of fear, his gallbladder would have burst into pieces!

1795 No Great Khan had ever been to that place before
No one, except perhaps his grandfather, [Murad]
Hüdavendigar, son of Orhan
1796 But he charmed those lands of Serbia and Wallachia
into submission
By displaying to them many kinds of magic
1797 You'd think he was Hamza on Mount Qaf
All sorts of giants flocked to his side
1798 What strange fears, and what difficult countries!
What strange faces, and what wondrous languages!
1799 Twenty thousand men gathered and came to him
The celestial spheres laughed in amazement at the
sight!
1800 No one before had ever followed such a plan
To go and charm those giants into submission!
1801 When the lord of the land [Musa] heard of his arrival,
He was filled with wrath, and did something in his
anger
1802 He said "Why is he coming? Let me go there!
I won't let him through, I'll stand up against him!
1803 I took this land by my own sword,
They know what I did to obtain this land!
1804 Who has the gall to think that he is able
To stand up against me and confront me in battle?
1805 Neriman could not do it, nor even Sam
Could come into this land of mine with peace of
mind!
1806 If Alexander of Macedon (*İskender-i Rūmī*) were to
come here
Even he would become but one of my retainers
1807 As for Feridun, what fortune could he have
To find the way to enter my land
1808 Tahamtan, Bahman, Bahram and Sohrab,
Their eyes would fill with tears from fear of me!
1809 What kind of man is Rustam, son of Zal,
That he could cross the sea and enter my province in
an instant?
1810 I say, I think I'll go to the land of Samarkand
I think I'll attack the provinces of Khorasan
1811 As soon as I take a sharp sword in my hand,
The giants and the lions will die of fear!
1812 Don't think I'll be scared by every calamity
For why should Musa be afraid of dragons?"
1813 Speaking in that way, he sent to his provinces
Servants with orders for the army to gather
1814 He said "Let a man go from house to house
Let the *beg*s of the land listen to that man's orders

1815 Let competent men be prepared for battle
Let them take their weapons and armor with them
1816 Their bows and arrows, their swords and truncheons
Their lances, their javelins, knives and battle-axes
1817 Let them bring battle-axes and scythes
And men who throw stones with slingshots
1818 And those who shoot short arrows from a grooved trough,
and those who shoot round arrows (*çarḫ oḳ*)
And those who hold a *sıbcın* (?) for that notched arrow (*gez oḳı*)
1819 Catapult-operators, throwers of Greek fire
Javelin-throwers, cannoniers
1820 May they all gather, come and arrive
This is the day of zeal, let them all fight
1821 Let them all be brave young men on foot and horseback
Let there be no old men and boys in the way
1822 Don't consider footsoldiers who carry leather purses
Or include cavalry with saddlebags
1823 Let no one come with a colt or lean horse
Let there be no footsoldier with old shoes"
1824 Gathering (his army) in this manner, [Musa] faced [Mehmed]
Believing in his army, he came up against [him]
1825 It was't necessary for him to speak such words!
He shouldn't have stood against his older brother!
1826 It would have been better if he handn't shown his older brother disrespect
Since *they* were there, it would have been better if he hadn't come!
1827 Now suppose that Musa was famous for his manliness
Mehmed's manliness was one thousand times greater!
1828 Now suppose that eternal fortune were like a ladder,
On that ladder, Mehmed would be ahead of Musa!
1829 Now suppose that Musa indeed held power for a time,
In the end, Mehmed was ruler of this world!
1830 Although *devlet* existed in Musa,
The *devlet* of Mehmed was truly greater!
1831 [Musa] harnessed together eighty thousand men
He brought that great army against [Mehmed]
1832 And on this side, the great sultan,
The lord of the world, that most noble khan
1833 Said: "Better that this brother had not come!
But since he has, what can we do, let God (*tengri*) be our comrade!

1834 May the influence of the saints and the prayers of the poor
Bring about the perpetuation of our *devlet*!
1835 Whoever shows most justice to these poor folk,
May my Lord be good to him, if he is willing!
1836 Only God knows best what is needed here
May He save the world from discord, if he is willing!"
1837 Speaking thus, he presented an army
Of eight thousand men and twenty thousand men
1838 On both sides they played trumpets, reeds (*ṣurnā*), and kettle-drums
And black became indistinguishable from white
1839 Banners were brought and standards were set up
Necks were stretched out, and backs were bent
1840 Shouts (*ġrīler*) were heard, and horses pranced about
The hearts stirred and the flesh trembled!
1841 Javelins, lances, swords, bows and arrows
Whoever saw them was baffled and lost his mind!
1842 As they put on cuirasses, coats of armor, shirts and mail
They had given up all pleasant conversation!
1843 The young braves killed pitilessly, taking heads
They started to do a great deal of fighting!
1844 The swords lit up, flashing like lightning
And the arrows were raining down like hail!
1845 The lances pranced around like dragons
And the tops of the banners were stained with blood!
1846 The streams were flowing with running blood
And souls were leaping out, escaping from the living!
1847 At that moment, the doors of appointed death were opened wide
And in every place, a thousand men died!
1848 How many men were glad to fight
And how many more were sad to depart so soon!
1849 How many men ran, pursuing a fleeing foe
And how many more stopped, then took to flight!
1850 How many men took to taking heads
And how many more gave up their own heads!
1851 How many men threw down the sword and grabbed the bow
And how many more completely lost their mind!
1852 How many horses flew gracefully like birds
And on how many more the flying birds flew down!
1853 How many horses trembled, jumped and flew
And how many more slipped, fell, and perished at once!

1854 How many horses threw down others with their breasts
And of how many more the lives of their riders were lost!
1855 On this side, just then the Sultan mounted his horse
The ruler of the world, the Khan, the Khagan [*ḫāḳān*]
1856 Like [the Prophet] Muḥammad, Zulfikar [Ali's sword] in his hand
He cut down hundreds and hundreds of horsemen!
1857 At that moment, he cut up whomever he met
And no man met him whose time was not up!
1858 Whenever he would kick his horse like Rustam
With his lance he would throw a man from his horse!
1859 With his sword, he made blood flow like the Oxus [*Ceyḥūn*]
With his truncheon he turned Mount Qaf into paste!
1860 He separated off those whose hour had come
And with his arrow split hairs in two!
1861 He could have caught a dragon with his lasso
And sent away all misfortune with his whip!
1862 He would catch a man and throw him in the air
And recite praises to Muhammad until he came down!
1863 He killed one man and tore another to pieces
And with half of one man, throw down another!
1864 He struck the soldiers one against the other
And scattered all the weapons that were standing there!
1865 He did to that enemy cavalry
What a falcon does to a flock of partridges!
1866 After him, his vizier entered [the battlefield]
That commander of the world, whose face is like Ali's
1867 The one and only Bayezid Beg, king of the world
Posesser of that blessed face, the soul of man
1868 He drove before him squadron after squadron
Forcing some of them to kiss his hand, and slaughtering others!
1869 When faced with his manliness, those two armies
Stood astonished, saying "Now there's a man!"
1870 Like Ali or Hamza, he fought most deftly
To finish that job, he fought most deftly
1871 Whatever he thought up worked out correctly
The adversary was defeated, and the whole land laughed with joy!
1872 Behind him, that *beg* entered [the battlefield]
The hunter of the enemy, the binder of the foe

1873 That leader, Hacı [Evrenos] Paşa, whose face is like Umar
Who made the battle there surpass all limits!
1874 If a dragon had come before him, he would have defeated him
If a great demon had stood before him, he would have captured him!
1875 He grabbed the collar of the enemy, and brought him captive
He finished off the job of healing the world!
1876 Behind him, that man who has the modesty of Uthman
Who comes from a great royal lineage, and is loyal to the king
1877 That vizier, son of a vizier, that crown of the nation
That [Çandarlı] İbrahim Paşa, mine of royal luck
1878 Entering the battle, he defeated the enemy
He grabbed [the enemy's] hand, thinking only of the world
1879 Thinking of him, any madman could be cured
God had written it, that he should heal the land!
(add.) [It was that King who had made him into a Muslim
That moon-faced one became Sultan again in his own province]
1880 Just so did our king, Sultan Mehmed
A true proof of the Muhammadan religion, Mehmed
1881 Arrive and take the borderlands (*ucāt*) like the *Mahdī*
He took the lands of Rum[eli], Laz [Serbia] and Bulgaria
1882 The Franks and Wallachians, the Serbs and Hungarians,
The Kıpçaks, Tatars and Russians
1883 He charmed into submission. *Beg*s came to meet him
The Byzantine Emperor, a consul [*küncülüs*], and their betters
1884 Along with them they brought there every day
Loads of gold and silver coins (*akçe*) on beasts of burden
1885 Big silver trays and golden pots
And golden drinking bowls, with stands to place them on
1886 The brought many camels loaded with goods
So many that it would be impossible to count them all!
1887 Mules loaded with Egyptian linen and silk brocade
Wool folded in four, and fine loose felt

1888 Thin cloth of gold thread, watered silk, and satin
Fine cloth embroidered with gold and silver, velvet, and many furs
1889 Sable, and ermine, and *ḳava* [?] and squirrel
Were brought in loads on beasts, and set down in every room
1890 There came pretty young lads, and beautiful slave girls,
Without comparison, and the people were astonished
1891 There came all sorts of camels, horses and mules
So many that the account books [*defātir*] were filled
1892 So that in each place they placed a man as scribe
To be the book-keeper for all accounting business [*siyāḳat işleri*]
1893 So that they would write down all day and all night
And receive that income, thousands by thousands, hundreds by hundreds
1894 The goods were amassed, the treasury was filled
The provinces secured, the cities opened up
1895 This Sultan became a great king of kings
A possessor of generosity, a mine of kindness, a beautiful khan!
1896 Even if his income is beyond counting
Even more is the bounty dispensed at his porte!
1897 If the goods from that end come in thousands by thousands
He dispenses bounty right away by the tens of thousands!
1898 If a man comes to him who is obviously poor [*bir bellü derviş*]
He gives him slaves, concubines, gold, silver, and a job!
1899 If a skillful man posessing knowledge comes to him
He gives him gold and silver until he says "Enough!"
1900 In matters of generosity, Hatem of Tayy has been forgotten
On those matters [Mehmed Çelebi] has closed the books!
1901 After this Sultan had made justice flow
Right away, Anushirvan was no longer remembered!
1902 After the Lord had made him victorious
At that moment, Alexander was forgotten!
1903 This great Sultan became a second Solomon
Thanks be to God, for this too suited [Mehmed] well!
1904 This region of Rum, Osman's land and the borderlands [*ucāt*]
Needed to be prepared for this state of happiness!

1905 As soon as they had captured the men who needed capturing
Right away, they let all the rest go free!
1906 What a sweet affair, that as soon as one soul died
One thousand times ten thousand souls in this world found peace!
1907 And even if the world had been seized by discord
Even if discord had reached all ends of the world
1908 May all souls be glad that [Musa] died quickly
The people of this world all found peace!
1909 May the Lord make this soul [Mehmed] endure
May He make this Sultan's rule over the possessions of the world endure
1910 May He make him Khan of all seven climes
May He make the whole world obedient to his rule!
1911 May Shiraz and Samarkand obey to his rule
And Egypt, and Syria, and Derbend [fortress on the Caspian]
1912 May he make all the lands in this world prosper
May he make all the creatures of this world happy
1913 May he, like Solomon, hold the whole world in his hand
May he make all the giants and mankind obedient!
1914 Feridun himself did not do battle in this way
Nor did Saadi put a battle in verse like this!
1915 Rustam himself did not fight like this, nor Bahram
Nor did Salman proclaim it in such verse!
1916 The Khagan (*ḫāḳān*) himself did not do battle in this way
Nor did such literary color enter the mind of Khaqani!
1917 Hamza himself did not perform such acts of valor
Nor did Hassan speak such words of eloquence!
1918 When this Abdülvasi makes his descriptions
If the mouth of Dehhani [*Dehhānī dehānı*] is silenced, so what?
1919 When this son of a *kadı* [*ḳāḍī-oğlı*] praises the king powerfully
The son of the sheikh [*Şeyḫoğlı*, a poet] has no choice but to become silent!
1920 When this humble slave laid the foundations of these words
The soul of Ahmedi became most glad!
1921 All my grandfathers are proud to hear these words
My father Kadı-oğlı, and my brother Mehmed

1922 This first fruit of my thought will deem itself good
At that moment when it is deemed pleasing by that beautiful Sultan!
1923 O God, may you make this work desirable
May you make me connected to [Mehmed Çelebi's] threshold!
1924 May you open the door of prayers onto it
And make sure that it isn't wanting in anything!

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